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## A Sketch of Keene,

The Gem of The Ashuelot Valley.

Originally Published in the Granite Monthly for February, 1895,

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

## Reminiscences and Sketches of Keene People,

Originally Published in the New Hampshire Sentinel,

Over the Signature "Ash Swamp."

THOMAS C. RAND.



The leading article in this little pamphlet was originally published in the Granite Monthly for February, 1895. The series of articles which follow appeared in the New Hampshire Sentinel at about the same time, and are republished here at the request of friends who wish to preserve them in this form.

THE AUTHOR.

Respectfully dedicated to my valued friend,  
J. Whitney Barstow, M. D.,  
of New York City.

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## A Sketch of Keene.

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In attempting the task of writing a readable article descriptive of one of New Hampshire's favored cities, the author is compelled to bear in mind the fact that the limit of space in the publication for which it is prepared precludes the possibility of giving more than a cursory glance at its chief features and characteristics at the present day, however great the temptation to enter into its early history and give a detailed account of its growth and prosperity from the date of its first settlement as a town up to the present time. The hardships endured by the early settlers, their successful struggles to maintain possession of the granted territory, and the subsequent events in the town's early history have been so often recounted by other writers, and are so familiar to the local public, that a repetition of the story in this connection seems entirely unnecessary and superfluous; therefore the Keene of today must be the principal theme of this article, with occasional allusions to events in the past and to former individual citizens who took part in them.

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The territory known as Keene for more than one hundred and forty years was granted by Massachusetts as Upper Ashuelot, April 20, 1733, but the few settlers who located here thus early were soon compelled to

abandon their homes on account of the depredations and hostility of the Indians. It was again occupied by white settlers in 1750, and incorporated as Keene, April 11, 1753, the name being given in honor of Sir Benjamin Keene.

The grant embraced a large section of the present town of Sullivan, which was set off in 1787, and the western portion of what is now the town of Roxbury, which latter town was incorporated in 1812. The sections thus taken from Keene comprised no small fraction of her area, yet they were spared ungrudgingly and without detriment to the material interests of the town beyond a slight but temporary diminution in the number of inhabitants, and a corresponding reduction in the amount of property on which taxes were assessed.

From year to year thereafter the town grew in population and wealth, although no single year was ever marked by any phenomenal growth in either of these directions. Wise and judicious management of public affairs characterized her career up to the time of the transition from a town to a municipal form of government, since when there has been a gradual improvement, even in this regard, until Keene has become one of the best governed cities in New Hampshire.

The city charter was adopted in March, 1873, after having been once

rejected by the voters, many of whom doubted the expediency of the proposed change. From that time date many of the improvements and public conveniences now seen on every hand. Previously the town had provided a partial supply of water for the use of residents of the village, but aside from this there were only the ordinary furnishings of a well governed country town.

One of the first important measures adopted by the city government, and one most successfully carried out, was the establishment of a sewerage system on the Waring plan, which has proved of incalculable benefit to the people living in the central part of the city. The line of sewerage traverses all the principal streets and the greater portion of the highways located within a radius of a mile from city hall. The undertaking seemed a gigantic one, as it involved a great expenditure of money and placed a heavy debt upon the city. The wisdom of the officials having charge of the enterprise has, however, been clearly demonstrated in the improved condition and enhanced value of all real estate along the lines of the sewer and in the bettered condition of the health of the general public throughout the city.

An additional supply of water was the next important matter taken in hand by the city government. Rights and privileges in a fine body of pure water were secured in the town of Roxbury, four miles distant, and an ample supply of water for domestic and fire purposes was provided. A commodious stone reservoir was built on Beech hill, whence water is distributed through nearly all the streets in sufficient volume to meet all ordinary requirements and provide ade-

quate protection against fire. The cost of this system of water supply was quite large, increasing the city debt many thousand dollars, yet it has proved an excellent investment, yielding as it does a large interest on the money expended, besides affording a water supply to the inhabitants of the city proper at a moderate cost and amply protecting against conflagrations.

The fire department has also been completely remodelled to conform to the changed condition of the water supply, and the city can boast of as fine apparatus and as efficient firemen as can be found in any place of its size in New England. Commodious buildings have been erected for the housing of steamers and other fire apparatus as well as for the accommodation of members of the department and the stabling of the city teams. Indeed, it is conceded on all hands that, with an abundant supply of water and a well equipped fire department, a disastrous conflagration is now almost an impossibility in Keene.

The improvement of the condition of the public roads and streets next claimed the attention of the city officials, who diligently sought to perfect and beautify them. At first much of the work in this department was of an experimental nature and therefore somewhat disappointing. Now, however, a successful system is in operation which bids fair to give us the best roads in the country, while our concreted sidewalks and street crossings are luxuries which no one can fail to appreciate. Several of the principal thoroughfares have been macadamized, and a few short sections of streets are covered with granite pavement. The city owns an inexhaustible granite quarry, where a steam stone-

crusher is employed in preparing material for macadamizing purposes. It also owns a steam road-roller, which does effective work in the construction and repair of highways. The principal streets are illuminated at night by electric lights, while many of those which are travelled less are lighted with gas.

Notwithstanding all these costly improvements, the indebtedness of the city is not burdensome, nor is it larger than that of most other municipalities of its class, while the rate of taxation is below that of any other city in the state. The total valuation of taxable property for the year 1894 was \$6,483,668. The rate of taxation is \$1.33 per \$100. These facts are significant, and go to prove that our municipal affairs are conducted by men of integrity and good judgment. The present population is estimated to be in excess of 8,000.

The public buildings belonging to the city consist principally of a fine large block, on the east side of Central square, in which are located the city offices, and a hospital building near the south end of Main street, the latter being a gift to the city from Hon. J. H. Elliot, whose liberality and public spirit have ever been in keeping with his masterly judgment in financial affairs and his able management of a large estate. His noble gift to the city is appreciated by all, and his name will be perpetuated as that of a generous benefactor and a sympathizer with unfortunate humanity.

The city is also in possession of a fine site for a library building, situated north of and adjoining the city hall property. This, too, was a gift to the city from Henry O. Coolidge, Esq., who, with certain restrictions which make it available for a library

site only, donated the property in the expectation that a prior gift from the estate of the late John Symonds, Esq., for the purpose of erecting a library building, would soon enable the authorities to proceed with the work contemplated by Mr. Symonds. The fact that unavoidable complications have delayed the carrying out of the designs of these generous donors should not detract from the debt of gratitude which the citizens owe them. The day is not very far distant, as now appears, when the beautiful library site will be occupied by a building of which the citizens will feel proud.

Other valuable real estate owned by the city consists of several tracts of woodland donated by individuals for the purpose of converting them into parks for the free use of citizens. The principal one of these lots comprises some twenty-two acres of plain land, situated a mile and a half west of the city hall, and known as "Wheelock Park," taking its name from the generous giver, George A. Wheelock, Esq., whose efforts to beautify the town by planting and preserving shade trees have characterized his whole life and made him a public benefactor. The gift of this property was a noble act on the part of Mr. Wheelock, who is never more happy than when mingling with the pleasure parties so often gathered in this park on a summer's day.

Another valuable gift to the city consists of eighteen acres of woodland situated near Wheelock park, on the opposite side of the highway. It was conveyed to the city by the late Miss Caroline Ingersoll, whose many public and private benefactions are well remembered by our citizens. The grounds are known as "Ladies' Park." They are well adapted to the purpose

designed by Miss Ingersoll, and are almost daily visited in the summer season by picnic parties and individuals who enjoy outdoor recreation.

"Dinsmoor Woods," lying half a mile north of the parks above mentioned, on both sides of Maple avenue, consists of eighteen acres of heavily wooded land, and to the liberality and public spirit of Miss Mary Dinsmoor and her lady associates is the public indebted for the preservation and free use of this beautiful grove.

"City Park," containing fifteen acres, is situated near the reservoir on Beech hill, and with the "Children's Woods" adjoining, consisting of twelve acres of woodland, was secured for the perpetual use of the public through the wise action of the city government and the munificence of Caleb T. Buffum, Esq.

These parks afford a delightful retreat for many a citizen who is unable to take extended trips to the mountains or seashore, and together with the beautiful and well kept park in Central square, are a priceless boon to the whole community.

There are many other attractive localities within the city limits where the natural scenery presents the most lovely views. Some of these overlook the broad plain on which the city is built, and give a magnificent view of neighboring villages, the Ashuelot valley, Monadnock and Ascutney mountains, and other objects which cannot fail to interest the beholder. Such a place is found at the summit of Beech hill, where Mr. H. L. Goodnow has erected an observatory, called the "Horatian Tower," and laid out the surrounding grounds in a most attractive manner. It is a lovely spot, and is destined to become the favorite resort of many Keene people during

the summer season. Similar slight locations are to be found for a distance of more than a mile along the summit of this hill, while on the opposite side of the city, two miles distant, lofty eminences, which will eventually be occupied as summer residences, afford fine views of the surrounding country. The drives in the suburbs of the city are also a very attractive feature which visitors as well as residents never fail to admire.

The business centre of Keene always presents a neat and tidy appearance. The various blocks in which stores are located are nearly all of modern architecture, some of them being magnificent in style and of imposing dimensions. Among those of recent construction or remodelled on modern plans are Bank block, Colony's block, Bridgman's block, and Stone's block, on the east side of the square; Clarke's block on the north; Lane's block, Gerould's building, and the Ashuelot Bank block on the west; while below the square we find on the east side Cheshire House block, Lane's two blocks, and Gurnsey's building, the latter to have an addition next year equal in size to the present structure; on the west side below the square we have Elliot's building, Buffum's block, Cheshire Bank building, Wright's block, Lamson's block, and the Sentinel building. All these are first-class buildings, while others in their immediate vicinity, although not so modern in style, are substantial and handsome structures. Just off the square, on Court street, is a fine building, recently erected by the First Church society, and occupied mainly as a dry goods and jewelry store. In these blocks and buildings are located most of the retail merchants, all of whom take pride in maintaining neat and attractive estab-

lishments. Not a dingy or ill kept store can be found here, while some of the most elegant stores in the state are conspicuous on every hand.

The county building occupies a fine location near the head of the square, presenting an imposing appearance. A few rods west of it, on Winter street, stands the elegant high school building; and on Washington street, in plain view from the square, is found the new jail. All these are of modern construction, and each makes a fine picture.

Six church spires are conspicuous in the heart of the city, while another, as yet incomplete, rises above the fine family residences of Washington street. The Young Men's Christian Association has also just dedicated a splendid new building, the first of the kind erected in New Hampshire by a similar organization.

Manufacturing establishments are quite numerous here. The oldest concern of this kind is the Faulkner & Colony manufacturing establishment, Hon. Horatio Colony, president. This firm has been in existence for nearly or quite three-quarters of a century. It is one of the most reliable manufacturing concerns in the country, and the products of its mills (flannels and dress goods) have always stood high in the market.

Nims, Whitney & Co. have extensive manufacturing works on Mechanic street, where they turn out doors, sash, and blinds in large quantities. This, too, is an old establishment, having been in operation more than forty years.

On the same street, is the manufactory of the Impervious Package Company, whose goods find a ready market. Hon. A. T. Batchelder is president of the company.

The Keene Glue Company, Osgood

W. Upham, president, manufacture glue in large quantities and of superior quality at their works on Court street, one mile from the square.

N. G. Woodbury manufactures pails in immense quantities at his mill on Washington street.

Beaver Mills corporation, Hon. J. H. Elliot, president, own a valuable manufacturing plant, situated a few rods east of Main street, near the tracks of the Fitchburg and the Boston & Maine railroads, where they manufacture pails in great quantities, and carry on an extensive business in lumber sawing, grain grinding, etc., besides furnishing steam power for numerous small manufacturing establishments located in their buildings, among which may be mentioned the box factories of J. M. Reed and C. M. Norwood, both of which turn out fine goods in large quantities.

Fitchburg Railroad repair shops are located here, and a large addition to their works is soon to be made. The present equipment of the shops enables the company to turn out first-class railway machinery, even to the production of a complete locomotive.

J. & F. French's carriage and sleigh factory on Church street is an old time establishment which has an excellent reputation all through New England. Its products are the very best of the kind in the country.

T. A. Peart and I. K. Champion, under the name of Keene Furniture Company, produce a large quantity of high grade furniture every year at their factory in Beaver Mills.

The Wilkins Toy Company, Harry T. Kingsbury, proprietor, manufacture mechanical toys in great variety. The factory is located on Myrtle street.

The C. B. Lancaster Shoe Company employ about a thousand hands at

their extensive factory at the foot of Dunbar street. The goods made at this establishment are first-class, and have a wide reputation for excellence.

The Humphrey Machine Company manufacture a great variety of machinery, including the celebrated IXL water-wheel, which is known throughout the world. John Humphrey is the moving spirit in the business, and is an inventor of ability.

Dunn & Salisbury manufacture chairs in great variety at their factory on Emerald street.

J. S. Taft & Co. manufacture pottery ware, and deal largely in crockery and glass ware at their works on Main street.

George W. Ball's Sons carry on the brick-making business on Appleton street, where they manufacture this building commodity on a large scale.

Wilkinson & McGregor manufacture harnesses, saddles, trunks, etc., at their factory in rear of their retail store on Main street, employing about thirty hands.

Cheshire Chair Company, E. & C. E. Joslin and G. W. McDuffee, proprietors, manufacture chairs of all kinds at their factory connected with Beaver Mills.

Elisha F. Lane manufactures brick in great quantities on his farm at the lower end of Main street.

The Read Furniture Manufacturing company, at South Keene, Charles H. Read, president, employs some thirty or forty hands in the manufacture of various kinds of furniture.

Several other smaller manufacturing concerns turn out a variety of goods, but those already named comprise the chief enterprises of this kind within the city limits.

The private residences in Keene deserving of special mention, because of their elegance and modern style of

architecture, are numerous. The broad and finely shaded streets of the central portion of the city are lined with costly dwellings, generally approached through spacious, well kept lawns. On West street, between Central square and the river, we find the elegant homes of many prominent citizens, among them those of Gen. S. G. Griffin, S. A. Gerould, Esq., Mrs. C. L. Kingsbury, Edward Joslin, Esq., Mrs. C. S. Faulkner, the Misses Tilden, Hon. Horatio Colony, W. S. Briggs, Esq., L. J. Brooks, Esq., Hon. C. J. Woodward, S. K. Stone, Esq., the Misses Colony, G. H. Richards, Esq., F. H. Whitcomb, Esq., J. C. Faulkner, the Alfred Colony heirs, and others.

Court street abounds in fine, modern style houses, conspicuous among which are the residences of Hon. A. T. Batchelder, O. G. Dort, Esq., Mrs. E. P. Dole, C. E. Joslin, S. W. Stone, Hon. R. H. Porter, D. H. Woodward, Esq., Leonard Boyce, G. D. Harris, Esq., Mrs. Susan Allen, Mrs. R. M. Caldwell, and many others deserving special mention did space permit.

Washington street has many desirable houses, yet the modern style of architecture does not so generally prevail there as in the streets previously mentioned. Some of those of recent construction, or remodelled within a few years, are owned and occupied by the following named persons: Dr. G. R. Dinsmoor, Mrs. K. C. Scott, Mrs. C. Bridgman, F. Petts, Hon. Asa Smith, F. L. Sprague, Mrs. G. B. Buffum, T. C. Rand, W. G. Hall, D. M. Pollard, B. F. Sawyer, H. S. Martin, C. W. Morse, L. M. Richards, G. O. Wardwell, Charles Wright, 2d.

Main street, like the avenue last mentioned, shows considerable ancient architecture, although many handsome residences, modern in style,

are found on either side of this broad and magnificent thoroughfare. Notable among these are the residences of W. S. Hale, Hon. J. H. Elliot, Gen. S. S. Wilkinson, Mrs. ex-Governor Hale, Hon. E. C. Thayer, Hon. Edward Gustine, S. O. Gates, Esq., Mrs. J. W. Prentiss, Mrs. C. W. Taintor, E. F. Lane, Esq., I. J. Dunn, Esq., and numerous others. Many fine residences are also found on other streets, but it is impossible to specify them here.

The religious societies in Keene are numerous, and each is in a flourishing condition. The oldest church organization is the First Congregational, over which the talented and venerated Z. S. Barstow, D. D., presided as pastor fifty years. The present pastor is Rev. William G. Poor. The house in which this society worships stands at the head of Central square, and is one of the oldest as well as one of the handsomest buildings in town.

The Baptist church has as its pastor Rev. A. W. Hand. Their house of worship is a substantial and elegant structure, situated on Court street.

The Methodist Episcopal church edifice is located nearly opposite the Baptist house of worship, and is similar to it in outward appearance. The pastor of the church at the present time is Rev. James Cairns, who was assigned to Keene for a second term at the last annual conference.

The Second Congregational church has as its pastor Rev. G. H. DeBevoise. It has a fine house of worship, located on Court street in close proximity to the last two mentioned above.

The Unitarian church and society are at this time worshiping tempo-

rarily in the Armory building, pending the erection of a handsome church edifice on Washington street. The building will be completed the present winter. Rev. C. B. Elder is the pastor of this church.

St. James's Episcopal church has a fine house of worship on West street. It is built of stone, in the English style of architecture, and presents a fine appearance. Rev. J. C. Ayer, Ph. D., is the present rector.

The Roman Catholic church building on Main street is one of the finest structures of the kind in the city. The society is in charge of Rev. J. R. Power, rector, with Rev. D. J. Dunn as assistant. A parochial school building has been erected in rear of the church, where a large number of pupils are taught in all branches of education usually pursued in like institutions.

Bethany Mission is a religious organization with a house of worship on Vernon street, where services are held regularly, although the society has no stated pastor. The church was organized mainly through the personal efforts of Mr. F. L. Sprague, whose contribution of the church building, as well as his liberality in aiding the maintenance of religious services therein, is appreciated by many citizens.

All of these religious societies maintain auxiliary organizations, devoted to religious and philanthropic work such as is usually performed by similar organizations in other places.

The schools in Keene and the system of education practised by direction of the superintendent of schools and the board of education merit and receive the approbation of every good citizen. The high school, under the charge of Robert A. Ray, A. M., as

head master, aided by an able corps of assistants, is of a high grade, and is doing a noble work in the interest of the youth of our city. The grammar and other graded schools are also excellent, and all are under the instruction of competent teachers. Thaddeus W. Harris, A. M., Ph. D., is the present superintendent of schools, while the board of education consists of Francis C. Faulkner, Wilton H. Spalter, Jesse B. Hyland, Bertram Ellis, Simon G. Griffin, Charles C. Buffum, Gardner C. Hill, Fred W. Chase, and Silas M. Dinsmoor.

Keene maintains a large number of orders and institutions, of a public as well as private nature, the objects of which are generally indicated by their titles. Among these may be found the several grades of Masonic bodies, from the blue lodge to that of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite. Odd Fellowship also has strong organizations in its various branches. The social features of these institutions are very attractive, compelling the admiration of all who join them.

Among the numerous other organized bodies which flourish here may be mentioned the Ancient Order of Hibernians, United Order of the Golden Cross, Order of the Pilgrim Fathers, Knights of Pythias, Ancient Order of United Workmen, Improved Order of Red Men, Monadnock Cycle club, Grand Army of the Republic, Cheshire Pomona Grange, Invalids' Home Corporation, Keene Humane society, Village Improvement society, Keene Natural History society; and probably there are other organizations of a social or benevolent character which the writer does not now call to mind.

In connection with these it may be proper to name our military organizations, consisting of two of the best

companies in the state, with headquarters in a spacious armory building on Winter street. Also the Keene Brass band, which dates its existence from 1855, and whose inspiring martial strains have enlivened our streets at frequent intervals for nearly forty years. Beedle's orchestra, too, should be named among the institutions of which the citizens feel proud, it having few equals in point of musical talent in all New England.

Public and private halls are numerous here, the large number of societies and organizations requiring extensive accommodations of this kind. Aside from City hall, which has a seating capacity of one thousand and more, we have Armory hall on Winter street, Golden Cross hall in Diphthong alley, Grand Army hall in Ball's block, Masonic hall in Elliot's block, Odd Fellows' hall in Cheshire House block, the Y. M. C. A. hall on West street, Warren's hall on Washington street, and a hall in Lane's new building which is to be occupied by the Odd Fellows when completed.

Hotels are not numerous in Keene, yet we can boast of at least one which is commodious and first-class in every particular—the Cheshire House, Chas. Hartwell proprietor. It is finely situated on the corner of Roxbury and Main streets, within a few rods of the railway station. The other hotels are respectively the City and the Eagle, both under the proprietorship of Henry Ward, and situated on Main street, just below the railway station. Good restaurants and excellent boarding-houses are plentiful, affording ample accommodations for those who prefer them to hotels.

Keene Driving Park association owns a large tract of land adjoining Swanzey Factory village on which is maintained an excellent half-mile

trotting course, which is the scene of many interesting racing contests and other sports every season. The grounds are well fitted up for the accommodation of the public, and here are held the annual fairs of Cheshire Grange.

Travelling facilities are afforded the people of Keene through the medium of the Fitchburg and the Boston & Maine railroads and by means of stages connecting with surrounding towns not provided with steam transportation. The railroad accommodations are sufficient for the needs of the people, and when a new union passenger station is built, as is likely to be the case in the near future, nothing but a street electric railway will be needed to fully satisfy the demands of the travelling public. This latter enterprise may take form at an early day, the last legislature having granted a charter for a road of this kind in Keene.

In the line of amusements, Keene is not behind her sister cities in providing clean and elevating entertainments during the theatrical season. City hall, converted into a neat opera house, only needs a small addition on the north end of the building, whereby better stage facilities can be obtained, to make the place a charming resort whenever a deserving entertainment is announced to be given there. Messrs. Barker & Quinn, the local managers of these entertainments, engage none but first-rate companies, and their efforts to please the public have been entirely successful in the past. Other public entertainments, such as lectures, concerts, readings, etc., are provided through the enterprise of the Y. M. C. A. managers, who are entitled to the thanks of our citizens for the pleasure thus afforded.

A fine monument, erected in 1871

to the memory of soldiers and sailors who died in defence of their country, stands in the park in Central square. It was designed by Martin Millmore, the noted Boston sculptor. The cost of the monument—about seven thousand dollars—was defrayed by the town, whose citizens are entitled to the credit of having been among the first in the state to thus honor their patriot dead.

The newspapers of Keene at the present time consist of two weeklies—the New Hampshire Sentinel and the Cheshire Republican—organs, respectively, of the Republican and Democratic parties, and one daily paper, the Keene Evening Sentinel. The weekly Sentinel is one of the oldest newspapers in the country, having been established in 1799 by Hon. John Prentiss, who was its editor forty-eight years and whose energy, public spirit, and devotion to the interests of this community are matters of local history with which most of our citizens are familiar. The paper is published by the Sentinel Printing Company in their elegant new building on Main street, and is in a flourishing condition.

The Cheshire Republican, O. L. Colony, editor and proprietor, dates its existence from the early years of the present century. It has always been a strong advocate of Democratic principles, and for many years its influence has been potent in the councils of Cheshire County Democracy.

The Evening Sentinel is owned and issued by the Sentinel Printing Company. It was started four years ago, and has more than met the expectations of its owners and of the general public. The chief aim of the paper is to give the local and general news of the day, and in this it is an unqualified success. The Evening Sentinel

is now regarded as one of our permanent institutions, and gives evidence of good management and excellent editorial ability. The Sentinel Printing Company is composed of T. C. Rand, president; C. J. Woodward, treasurer and business manager; W. H. Prentiss, clerk; and Bertram Ellis. Both publications issued by this company are conducted under the editorship of Mr. Ellis, with Mr. Prentiss as city editor.

A religious paper called the Christian Herald has recently been started here under the auspices of the evangelical churches, whose pastors act as its managers and editors.

Financial affairs, especially banking enterprises, engross the attention of many Keene people, employing a large amount of capital. The oldest banking institution in the city is the Cheshire National bank, Hon. J. H. Elliot, president; Hon. R. H. Porter, cashier. It was chartered as a state bank in 1803, and Daniel Newcomb was its first president. Its present capital is \$200,000.

The Ashuelot National bank, George A. Wheelock, president; H. O. Coolidge, cashier, was originally chartered as a state bank, and was incorporated in 1833. Its first president was Gov. Samuel Dinsmoor, who served in that capacity until his death in 1835. Present capital of this institution, \$150,000.

Keene National bank, Edward Joslin, president; Wallace L. Mason, cashier, was also chartered as a state bank and organized in 1858, with Zebina Newell as its first president. Its capital is \$100,000.

Citizens' National bank, O. G. Dort, president; Arthur L. Wright, cashier, was incorporated in 1875. S. D. Osborne was its first president. Capital, \$100,000.

Cheshire Provident Institution for

Savings, Hon. A. T. Batchelder, president; Oscar G. Nims, treasurer, was chartered and organized in 1833, and is one of the oldest savings banks in the state. Its first president was Dr. Amos Twitchell, and its first treasurer George Tilden, the latter serving in that capacity nearly fifty years.

Keene Five Cents Savings bank, Caleb T. Buffum, Esq., president; G. A. Litchfield, treasurer, was incorporated in 1868. John H. Fuller was its first president, and O. G. Dort its first treasurer.

Keene Guaranty Savings bank, F. H. Kingsbury, treasurer, was incorporated in 1883, with a guaranty fund of \$50,000. Its first and thus far its only president was the late Hon. James Burnap, and its first treasurer was O. G. Dort.

All of these financial institutions have been of great value to the people of Keene and Cheshire county, aiding materially in the business prosperity of the community.

The people of Keene have been fortunate since the adoption of the city charter in their annual election of a mayor and other elective officers of the city government. The first mayor, Hon. Horatio Colony, was and still is a prominent business man whose well known abilities and honesty of purpose secured for him a handsome majority at the polls, notwithstanding the fact that the Democratic party in which he was a leader was largely in the minority in the city. His administration of affairs at this early date in the history of the city was warmly approved by the citizens, and he was reelected to the office the following year.

Hon. Edward Farrar succeeded Mr. Colony in the office of mayor in 1876, and was reelected for a second term.

Hon. Reuben Stewart was the incumbent in 1878 and again in 1879.

Hon. Horatio Kimball was Mr. Stewart's successor in 1880.

Hon. Ira W. Russell served in 1881, and was reelected for 1882.

Hon. Horatio Kimball again filled the office in 1883 and 1884.

Hon. A. T. Batchelder followed in 1885 and 1886.

Hon. Asa Smith succeeded Mr. Batchelder in 1887, and was elected a second time.

Hon. Herbert B. Viall was mayor in 1889, and served two terms.

Hon. Horatio Kimball occupied the office for a fourth term in 1891.

Hon. Frederic A. Faulkner was elected to succeed Mr. Kimball, and has just completed a third term, having been twice reelected.

The present mayor, Hon. George W. McDuffee, was elected at the municipal election in December, and has just begun his first term in that office.

Each of the incumbents of the mayor's office has made an honorable record, evincing an earnest desire to promote the interests of the city, and to maintain the reputation which Keene has so long enjoyed of being one of the best governed municipalities in the state.

It would be ungenerous to close this brief sketch without at least making mention of some noted former citizens who contributed to the prosperity of Keene, and conferred honors upon the town and state as well. A full list of such personages would gladly be given here, yet a passing notice of the more prominent ones must suffice.

Keene has furnished three governors of the state, viz.: Samuel Dinsmoor, who filled the executive chair for three years, from June, 1831; Samuel Dinsmoor (son of the former), from June, 1849, to June, 1852; Samuel

W. Hale, for two years, from June, 1883. Another former governor, William Haile, resided here several years subsequent to the expiration of his official term, and until his death.

The congressional district to which Keene belongs has been represented in the United States congress for six terms by residents of this place, viz.: Peleg Sprague, Samuel Dinsmoor, Sr., Joseph Buffum, Salma Hale, James Wilson, Jr., and Thomas M. Edwards.

Many other prominent men of the past, whose names and memory are cherished by our citizens, earned the eternal gratitude of posterity by their untiring zeal and successful efforts in behalf of the religious, educational, and business enterprises projected in the early years of the nineteenth century. Among these the name of John Prentiss is entitled to first place, having been so early identified with the town's history. Aside from his able management of one of the most influential political newspapers in the state for a period of forty-eight years, Mr. Prentiss was an indefatigable worker in the various causes which claim and receive the support of good citizens everywhere. Education and temperance were his favorite themes when in conversation with young men, to whom his advice and example were often of great benefit, though not always appreciated. He was not a "public" man in the general sense of that term, never seeking and but seldom consenting to hold office, yet his interest in public affairs was never abated until death closed his long and useful career just as he was rounding out nearly a full century of existence.

Zedekiah Smith Barstow, D. D., the beloved pastor of the First church from 1818 until 1868, although a score of years the junior of Mr. Prentiss,

was contemporary with him in educational and temperance work, their only personal differences growing out of religious views as expressed through the *Sentinel* and from the pulpit. Dr. Barstow's career was as remarkable and inspiring as that of Mr. Prentiss, and no two men ever lived in Keene who wielded so much influence for good as did these honored citizens.

Amos Twitchell, M. D., the genial, brilliant, noble, and generous physician, whom everybody loved, was also interested in all public matters pertaining to the welfare and education of the young, and his warning voice against the use of intoxicating liquor saved many from destruction. His death, at the age of 69 years, was a public calamity.

Hon. Salma Hale, statesman, author and profound lawyer; Hon. Levi Chamberlain, brilliant lawyer and popular advocate at the bar; Hon. Thomas M. Edwards, prominent and influential in all public matters and an early advocate of railroad enterprises in this section; Phineas Handerson, eminent barrister and dignified gentleman; Gen. James Wilson, lawyer, statesman, orator, and big-hearted friend; Charles G. Adams, M. D., eminent practitioner and courtly gentleman; George Tilden, educator, philanthropist, and faithful custodian of trust funds; John H. Fuller, honest merchant and kind though impulsive friend of the poor; Francis A. Faulkner, brilliant lawyer, faithful public servant, loyal citizen, and genial friend; William P. Wheeler, the silver-tongued orator and honored jurist; Farnum F. Lane, profound lawyer and honest adviser; Edward Farrar, faithful official, delightful companion, and generous friend;—all these and many others, whose memory is embalmed

in the hearts of living citizens, and whose public services are recorded in the archives of the town and city, deserve more than a passing notice here, but space forbids. Of each it can truly be said, in the language of Shakespeare, “Such a man might be a copy to these younger times.”

The writer in closing this sketch cannot resist the temptation to again refer to the early history of Keene and the beautiful city which has been developed in this valley of the Ashuelot.

The choice of “Upper Ashuelot” as a local habitation by the early settlers in this valley attests their practical wisdom. Though compassed about on every hand by the primeval forest, in which the Indians lurked and wild beasts prowled by night, the pioneers of 1734 and 1753 discerned, as if by prophetic instinct, the latent possibilities of this spot, and resolutely set themselves about the task of developing its resources. And when, in the course of time, clearings made by the woodman’s axe let the sunlight into the deepest recesses of the wilderness, the hidden beauties of the landscape began to reveal themselves, like a symmetrical statue under the sculptor’s hand.

Gradually there emerged from the chaotic woodland the lines of grace which terminate the view,—the long undulating crests of Beech hill, forming the eastern horizon; the bold summit of West mountain; and, in the distant perspective, the sky-piercing peak of grand Monadnock, marking out for our ancestors, as for their descendants, the visible boundaries of earth and heaven.

Winding through the valley to which it gave its name, then, as now, flowed the gentle rivulet that turns

the wheels of many a mill, and makes the air vocal with the murmurous hum of various industries.

The fort, to which the families of the Blakes, the Fishers, and others of the earliest time had fled for refuge from the fury of the savages, gave place at length to the church and the tavern—twin institutions which our manly forefathers deemed indispensable adjuncts of their civilization; the blazed path through the woods broadened into Main street, as we know it now, with its colonnade of stately elms; outlying swamps were reclaimed and

craggy hills subdued to the uses of husbandry; newspapers and schools, manufactories and savings banks, railroads and public libraries came later in the evolution of our modern corporate and municipal life, until, to-day, Keene is fully abreast of the enlightened spirit and progressive social development of the age.

Our citizens justly cherish a local pride in the city to whose beauties every passing stranger pays the tribute of admiration, and whose growth and prosperity command the respect of the financial and business world.



# Reminiscences and Sketches of Keene People.

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## LOOKING BACKWARD.

### Some Events in the Early History of Cheshire Railroad.

The death of Hon. Reuben Stewart, recently announced in the *Sentinel*, reminds some of our older citizens of the time when the construction of the Cheshire Railroad was in progress, Mr. Stewart having been early identified with that enterprise as well as an important factor in its successful career for nearly half a century. The contractors for the building of the road above Keene to East Westmoreland were Messrs. Parmalee & Ward, from York State, who brought with them a large force of men and established their headquarters at the "Summit," employing Mr. Stewart as their clerk and superintendent of a supply store established for the accommodation of their workmen, in which capacity he developed extraordinary business qualities which came to be appreciated by all in after years. Mr. Stewart was then a young man with a wife and small family of children, who were domiciled in a shanty near the store.

Messrs. Parmalee & Ward were honorable men, treated their help well and paid their debts promptly, notwithstanding which fact the workmen would occasionally indulge in a strike for some unaccountable reason and become turbulent and threatening in their attitude toward the contractors. At such times it became necessary to

appeal to the authorities for protection, and a dozen times or more before the road was completed Sheriff Foster ordered out the light infantry companies of Keene and Westmoreland to suppress the rioting. The workmen stood in mortal fear of the military, and when the guns and bayonets began to glisten in the sunlight along the Summit road there would be a tremendous scampering for the adjacent woods, and not a rioter could be found by the time the troops arrived at the scene of disturbance. Then would begin a hunt for the offenders, sometimes continuing two or three days, during which time Mr. and Mrs. Stewart kept open house and regaled the soldiers with hot coffee, doughnuts, and such other refreshments as could be conveniently provided.

On one of these occasions the "Keene Light" squad, under command of Col. Robert Wilson, arrived at the Summit just at dark on a bright summer evening, and as usual the rioters fled to the woods. Col. Wilson ordered immediate pursuit, but the darkness prevented a successful search for the offenders, who shouted derisively at their pursuers and kept up a continual but harmless fusilade with shot guns and cobble stones during the whole night. As daylight approached all became quiet and it was evident that the "enemy" was in hiding. Placing his men about twenty rods apart, Col. Wilson ordered an ad-

vance, with instructions to arrest every man found in the woods and deliver him to the sheriff, who was stationed at the store, but positively forbidding the discharge of a gun unless the enemy showed fight. The writer, then in his teens, was at the extreme right of this advancing column and entirely out of sight of his nearest comrade. Suddenly, while making his way through the tangled brush, the gigantic form of an Irishman armed with a shot gun rose up before him, and he was greeted with the exclamation, "Don't shoot! I surrender! I surrender!" At the same time the Irishman handed over his gun and expressed a willingness to obey any order that might be given by his captor. To say that the young soldier was excited does not begin to express it—he was frightened half to death, for the prisoner was twice his size and weighed not less than two hundred pounds. However, collecting his senses, he locked arms with his prisoner and started back to headquarters, which were reached in safety, much to the relief of at least one of the party. As they approached the store Mr. Stewart stood on the steps with the sheriff, and although he was always a sober-faced and dignified man, he actually laughed when he comprehended the situation.

Mr. and Mrs. Stewart were never disturbed by the rioters on these occasions, for they were always kind to the workmen and very popular with all with whom they came in contact. Mr. Stewart always contended that the workmen were not half as much to blame for their conduct as were the rum sellers who periodically visited the camp and supplied them with liquor, and in several instances he was instrumental in having an offender's fine remitted, even paying it

himself when unsuccessful in his efforts in that direction. His generosity and kindness made him a universal favorite with the workmen, some of whom entered into the employment of the railroad corporation after the road was completed, remaining in that capacity long after Mr. Stewart became superintendent of the line.

Riots similar to those at the summit occurred occasionally along the line below Keene, but they were almost invariably caused by the failure of the contractors to pay off their help promptly, and many times there was quite severe fighting before order could be restored, although it is not remembered that any fatalities resulted therefrom.

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#### IRA WETHERBEE.

#### An Old Time Gambler, Crook and Alleged Criminal.

A correspondent of the *Sentinel* in a recent issue made reference to a notorious individual who flourished in this community fifty years ago, and whose fame as a gambler and crook finally extended throughout the South and West. The name of this renowned person was Ira Wetherbee, and his home was in Chesterfield, where he owned a farm near the centre of the town. He was a lithe, wiry, good-looking young man when I first knew him, and on public occasions like musters and trainings he was generally on hand with his dice-box and playing cards, prepared to entertain the boys with any kind of gaming they wished to indulge in and incidentally to rake in what spare cash they possessed.

He sometimes dressed in a flashy style, a blue or green dress coat ornamented with brass buttons, white trousers, a red necktie and a black

silk hat with a "weed" being prominent features of his costume. It was said that he always carried a brace of pistols, but if so he was not in the habit of displaying them or of threatening violence of any kind, although no one doubted his readiness to defend himself in case of altercations arising from his dangerous vocation. His movements and general habits were mysterious, one peculiarity being that he would never ride on the middle seat of a stage coach or sit at a hotel table with others unless he could face all in the room. Invariably when visiting a hotel he would keep all strangers in front of him, and if he took a seat it was with his back to the wall, thus giving the impression that he was in constant fear of an attack from some one whom he had wronged.

In the manipulation of cards and dice he was an expert and was believed to be more than a match in this respect for the shrewdest gamblers of the times. During one of his visits to Keene, about 1845, he called at Tilden's bookbindery when the writer was present and asked the foreman of the shop to trim some cards which he said were improperly finished. Producing a number of packs of "starbacks," he directed that they be trimmed by clipping a very small, slightly wedge-shaped strip from one side of the spot cards, leaving the others as they were, thus creating a style of cards which came to be known as "strippers," and with which an expert manipulator could give his opponent high or low cards at will. After the trimming was completed Wetherbee threw out a silver dollar for the foreman, remarking, "Young man, I hope you will never play cards for money."

Not many years after this, Wetherbee was charged with burning some buildings in Chesterfield, and although he was not arrested an indictment was found against him by the grand jury of the Common Pleas court over which Judge Joel Parker presided. One night during the early part of the term of court the records were stolen from the court room, thus destroying the evidence against Wetherbee and necessitating a postponement of the trial. The Court offered a reward of five hundred dollars for the recovery of the records, but no trace of them could be found during the several days' search by the sheriff and his deputies. One frosty morning in October, about two weeks after the records were abstracted, two boys from the Sentinel office were out shooting partridges on Beech Hill, when they stumbled upon a pile of ashes where some one had built a fire, evidently but a short time previous. Curiosity led them to rake over the pile with their guns, when they discovered bits of paper with writing upon them which they instantly recognized as the chirography of Leonard Bisco, the clerk of the court. At once it dawned upon their minds that they had found the remains of the missing court records, and they at once notified Judge Parker of the discovery. He accompanied them to the spot, which was some twenty rods south of the present reservoir, and after inspecting the find pronounced it the remains of the stolen documents, and he did not hesitate to say that in his opinion Ira Wetherbee perpetrated the burglary in order to destroy evidence of a crime more serious in its character. Nothing was said by the officials regarding the reward offered for the recovery of the records,

and perhaps the boys referred to could have had no just claim for their services, but they felt at the time as though they were at least entitled to the thanks of the Court, although no such courtesy was shown them.

Wetherbee was a frequent visitor in Keene and attended many of the military balls given by the Light Infantry company at the Emerald House. He was a graceful dancer and his conduct on such occasions was irreproachable. At one of the annual trainings of the Light Infantry company he presented himself at the armory and asked to be allowed to join the ranks, which request was granted by the officers, who furnished him with a uniform and other necessary equipments. Proceeding to the rear room in the armory he divested himself of two complete suits of clothing, both of fine quality but entirely different in color and style, and then donned the uniform, in which he looked every inch the soldier. The armory was well stocked with liquors of all kinds which were free to all members of the company. After dressing, Wetherbee handed the captain a huge roll of bank bills, requesting him to keep it until the training was over as he had no pocket that would accommodate it. He then proceeded to avail himself of the privileges enjoyed by the members of the company, and after taking two or three drinks and filling his canteen with choice cherry rum, he took his place in the ranks and the company started for Central Square. Before marching far it was discovered that Wetherbee had a bigger load than he could carry. What to do with him was a momentous question with the officers, but they finally placed him in the centre of a section, with a comrade on each side to keep him from

falling. The company then marched directly to the Emerald House, where Wetherbee was left to recover from the effects of his intemperate libations. He afterward apologized to the officers, declaring at the same time that it was the first and last time of his being drunk in Keene. His roll of money left with the captain contained nearly two thousand dollars, and he was evidently expecting a gambling contest for big stakes.

Wetherbee was suspected of various crimes, even of highway robbery as well as arson. On one occasion he gave a Keene gentleman, the late Col. Nehemiah Hart, quite a scare. The colonel had just completed a contract for building a road along the shore of Spofford Lake and had been paid the price agreed upon by the selectmen of Chesterfield. As he was about starting for home, late in the day, Wetherbee approached him and inquired if he had got his pay for the job. Unthinkingly, the colonel replied that he had his pay in his pocket, and soon after he started for Keene. He had not driven many miles before he was overtaken by a man with a horse and gig who rushed by him with great speed and disappeared in the darkness. The colonel recognized the man as Ira Wetherbee, although no words were spoken as he passed; and believing that he was in danger of being robbed he turned about and drove to a farm house near by, where he remained all night. After putting up his team the colonel and his host watched the road until they saw Wetherbee slowly returning toward Chesterfield with his horse and gig, doubtless wondering what had become of his intended victim.

Shortly after this, or about the time of the gold discovery in Cali-

fornia, Wetherbee disappeared from this section of the country, and it was rumored that he was killed in a gamblers' fight while crossing the Isthmus on his way to the land of gold. The influence which Wetherbee exercised upon the young men and boys in this community was very demoralizing. His jaunty air, free and easy manners and total disregard of the consequences of his reckless course of life made him a hero in the eyes of many young men who imagined that wealth and a life of ease might result from following his pernicious example.

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#### SPELLING SCHOOLS.

##### A Favorite Pastime in Country School Districts Fifty Years Ago.

Mr. Editor: A news item in a recent number of the *Sentinel* relative to a spelling contest in the neighboring village of Brattleboro, Vt., revives memories of similar contests frequent in my boyhood days, a brief description of which may serve as a fitting close of the series of reminiscences in which I have indulged of late, perhaps too freely.

The country boys and girls of fifty years ago had few sources of amusement and recreation compared with those enjoyed at the present day even in the quietest of rural villages. There were no grange organizations with weekly meetings and frequent festivals as is now the case in almost every town, and neighborhood parties, apple parings and spelling schools were the principal amusements during the long dreary winters. Of these diversions the spelling school was easily the most popular and beneficial as an educator. In those days, all studied the spelling book as long as they attended school. Poor spelling

was a disgrace. In stormy winter evenings children would hear each other spell until the whole book became familiar. In some towns spelling schools were held one evening in a week during the winter term. Each district had its own school, but pupils from other districts were invited. All were free to attend, and all were given an equal chance. Children not more than eight or ten years old were welcomed if they could spell, and it was often the case that these young people carried off the honors as well as the prizes which were sometimes awarded the most proficient in spelling. These schools were announced several days beforehand, so that pupils in other districts might know of them, and boys and girls often went two or three miles to take part in the contests, which were as interesting and exciting as the ball and tennis games of the present day, and as profitable, perhaps, both mentally and physically. The school house was the place of meeting, and it was made attractive by a rousing blaze in the fireplace and rows of burning candles and whale oil lamps along the desks and upon the teacher's table.

When the hour for spelling arrived, the master called the school to order by rapping upon his desk. Often-times there were as many spectators as spellers, but they were still and orderly, so interested were they in the contest. Two of the older pupils were generally selected to choose sides, and these drew lots for first choice. Of course the best spellers were chosen first. Neither beauty nor favoritism had any influence in the choice. The freckled faces and the turned-up noses were as sure to be chosen first as the fairer ones, if they could spell. The one that chose first

spelled first; then the one opposite, and in this way they continued to spell back and forth. If a word was misspelled on one side and rightly spelled on the other, the latter had a right to draw to its ranks any one from the other side except the chooser. Sometimes one would win all from the other side, and when neither could conquer in this way the contest was decided in favor of the side having the fullest ranks at the hour agreed upon for closing. At other times every one who misspelled a word sat down and took no further part in the exercises. The rules were strict. No whispering was allowed, and if a pupil was detected in prompting a member of the class, the other side had the right to draw one from that side or to require the culprit to sit down. The teacher was obliged to be constantly on the watch. He was judge and jury and decided all disputed questions. In fact, a successful and profitable spelling school depended as much on the teacher as on the pupils. Good spellers, like good singers, were known for a long distance and they were in great demand at the spelling matches, not only in their own district and town, but in neighboring towns.

The social part of the spelling school was no less interesting than the intellectual. There were always more boys than girls, and when they were ready to go home the scramble for partners was great fun for those who had just reached the age for mischief and pranks. It was not the plain-faced girl who had done the spelling, the one that had given Harry's side the victory, that he remembered in the home-going. It was the girl with the smiles and dimples, the one on the other side who had mis-

spelled almost every word. Harry was a philosopher, and he believed the blessings should be equally divided.

How clearly those old-time winter scenes come back to me as I write! It seems but yesterday that I left them. I see the school, the master and the spellers. I see the lights go out and hear the clang of the heavy door; I feel the warm hand-clasps and hear the tender good-byes, and I hear footsteps crunching the icy snow and the sound of merry voices growing fainter and fainter in the distance and darkness until all is silent. Orion and the Pleiades still shine over those places, but the old school house with its slanting aisles has succumbed to the march of progress and the school-master has gone with it. The boys and girls who helped to make life so bright and joyous to me are all scattered. Some are yet busy with the world's work, but the most of them are "over the river."

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#### A BOYHOOD INCIDENT.

##### Mr. George A. Wheelock Mistakes a Cat for a Rabbit.

The reference to Mr. Wheelock made by the writer of the article entitled "An Old Keene Muster," published in Saturday's Evening Sentinel, reminds me of an incident of my early days, when Mr. W. was a young man and famous throughout the neighborhood of Keene as a "dead shot" with a rifle. It was his habit to stroll along the highway skirting the meadows, near which I then lived, in the West part of the town, armed with his trusty weapon, and pick off blackbirds, hawks or rabbits at a distance which made the accomplishment of such feats seem marvelous in my youthful eyes.

One morning, as I was watching my favorite white cat in her search for meadow moles, a hundred yards at least from the road, I was startled by the sharp crack of a rifle and a gymnastic performance on the part of pussy, who jumped three or four feet into the air and then bounded away for the house. Looking around, I saw Mr. Wheelock, whom I well knew, standing in the road with his smoking rifle in his hands, and near him was another young man (presumably Mr. Perry) who was armed likewise. The cause of pussy's sudden flight became at once apparent. I shouted at the top of my voice, "Don't shoot my cat, Mr. Wheelock," and the reply came back, "Oh was that a cat? We thought it was a rabbit. I am sorry I frightened her so, and hope I didn't hit her."

On returning home I found pussy had lost about half an inch of one of her ears, but was otherwise uninjured. At the time I doubted Mr. W.'s assertion that he mistook the cat for a rabbit, but in after years, when I came to know him better, I became convinced that he was not a man who would wantonly injure a domestic animal or outrage the feelings of a poor boy by knowingly shooting at his favorite pussy.

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#### OLD CUSTOMS.

#### The Writer Recalls Practices of Fifty Years Ago.

Elderly people are apt to delight in contemplating the events and customs of their early days, especially the customs which have become obsolete or relegated to "innocuous desuetude."

One of the old-time practices in almost every New England village was the ringing of the church bell at noon and 9 o'clock p. m. every day, and

even in bustling little Keene this custom prevailed within the memory of those whose age does not exceed fifty years. There were then no steam whistles or railway trains to denote a particular hour, and the noon bell was almost a necessity—certainly a great convenience—and people depended upon it for the correct time. The bell in the old First church tower was the one used for this purpose up to about the time the Cheshire railroad was opened, there being but one other church bell in the centre of the town at that time.

The bell now in the tower of the Baptist church edifice was then located in the steeple of the old meeting house in Ash Swamp, and was known as the "Ash Swamp bell." This bell was also rung at noon and night for the benefit of the people living in that part of the town. Occasionally the bell ringing at "The Swamp" was in charge of the boys, who sometimes prolonged the ceremony to the extent of creating an alarm of fire at the centre, and more than once the writer has seen the entire fire department of the town rushing through West street and along the Westmoreland road on its way to a supposed conflagration in the vicinity of the swamp meeting house. To prevent mistakes of this kind it was finally agreed that the firemen should pay no attention to this bell unless its ringing was continued more than five minutes!

Another odd custom was the tolling of the church bell to announce the death of a person. The sex of the deceased was indicated by a few strokes in quick succession—three for a male and four for a female—followed after a brief interval by the number of strokes corresponding with the age in years; so that, in almost every in-

stance, the name of the dead person was made known through this medium, as everybody in those days was acquainted with all the people of their town and knew of all serious cases of illness in the community. These solemn announcements were heard in all parts of the town and listened to with great interest.

These old customs, once so general, have now almost entirely disappeared. There may be here and there a country town where one or more of them are still observed, but it is probable that no town in Cheshire county continues them to this day.

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#### THE TIPPECANOE CAMPAIGN.

##### **Daniel Webster's Speech at a Whig Mass Meeting in Keene.**

Every citizen of Keene who remembers the exciting local events attending the presidential campaign of 1840 can with pleasure recall the visit of Daniel Webster in September of that year and his speech before a Whig mass meeting held on the academy grounds on Winter street. It was an occasion such as Keene had never before enjoyed and interest in it was universal throughout Cheshire county. It was probably the largest mass meeting ever held here prior to that time, Democrats as well as Whigs flocking in great numbers to see and hear the wonderful orator whose fame, even at that time, was worldwide. The words and sentiments uttered by Mr. Webster on the occasion referred to cannot now be recalled by one who was then but ten years of age, but his dignified manner and imposing figure will be remembered, by all who saw him, as long as memory lasts. From the opening to the close of Mr. Webster's remarks the audience was as quiet and orderly as if

listening to a sermon in church, the universal desire being to catch every word that fell from the speaker's lips. To the younger portion of the audience the occasion appeared to be one of great solemnity, and when at the close of the address a glee club struck up a rollicking Tippecanoe song they could not repress the feeling that it was almost a sacrilegious act and entirely inappropriate to the occasion.

The statue of Mr. Webster in the state house yard at Concord represents him as he appeared at the time of his visit to Keene and is astonishingly correct. There is something awe-inspiring in the bronze figure there displayed, but to have seen the original and listened to his matchless eloquence was to compel reverence and impress one with the feeling that Daniel Webster was something more than human. No wonder that the people almost worshipped this wonderful man and referred to him as "the God-like Daniel."

After Mr. Webster's visit the campaign grew exciting and absorbed the attention of almost every citizen up to the day of election. Party spirit ran high, many personal encounters resulting therefrom. There were no campaign flags displayed, no parades, no torchlight processions, but until a late hour almost every night the streets swarmed with men and boys of both parties who sang campaign songs and lustily cheered for their respective candidates for the presidency and uttered sepulchral groans for their opponents. These wild orgies were kept up until the day of election, when for two or three days comparative quiet reigned, both parties breathlessly awaiting the nation's verdict. When this was finally announced the excitement became intense and the victorious Whigs in-

dulged for an entire day in the most extravagant demonstrations of joy. Three field pieces were procured and properly manned, and with these were kept up an almost incessant cannonading in and around Central Square for more than six hours.

#### Other Campaigns.

Compared with the political campaign of 1840 those of '44 and '48 were tame affairs, but the one preceding the election of Franklin Pierce to the presidency in 1852 was very exciting throughout the state, partly owing to the fact that Mr. Pierce was a citizen of New Hampshire. Keene people took a deep interest in the contest, and it was during this campaign that flags bearing the names of political candidates were first "flung to the breeze." These were not swung across the street by a rope or wire as is now the practice, but were displayed in the only way in which the United States flag should be floated—from a mast or liberty-pole. The first campaign flag raised in Keene bore the names of Scott and Graham, the last candidates ever nominated by the Whig party for the offices of president and vice president. The flagstaff was erected over the Sentinel office, then located in what is now Whitcomb's block. It towered some thirty feet above the ridgepole, and from it depended a modest little flag inscribed as above stated. This movement on the part of the Whigs aroused the Democrats, who at once erected a taller pole over the Cheshire Republican office from which they displayed a larger flag bearing the names of their candidates, Pierce and King. The Whigs then spliced their pole, making it several feet taller than the one over the Republican office, and procured a new and larger flag. This

was followed on the part of their opponents by the erection of a new and very handsome pole cut from a spruce tree which measured nearly eighty feet in height, and from this was floated the largest flag ever seen here up to that time.

The young and active Whigs determined to beat their opponents in the matter of poles and flags if nothing else, and they began scouring the woodlands in search of a still taller tree. At last one was found in the town of Sullivan which experienced mill men said was over one hundred feet in height. It was immediately felled, hewn down to the right proportions and decorated with several coats of white paint before it was drawn out of the woods. A large gilded figure of an eagle was fastened to the top, pulleys were inserted just below it, and the pole was ready for use. It was drawn down to the Square and by cutting a hole through the roof of the Sentinel building on the east side the boys were enabled to raise it to a perpendicular with the big end resting on the attic floor where it was securely fastened. The height of this staff above the ridgepole was ninety-one feet and the flag which had been made especially for it was fifty feet in length by thirty in width—the largest flag, the manufacturer said, that was ever made to float from a flagstaff. It was a handsome sight to see this flag, surmounted by a streamer one hundred feet long, flying in a stiff breeze, as all the proportions of the outfit were symmetrical and the flag itself was held close to the staff by hoops fastened to the edge at intervals of two or three feet. In rainy or damp weather, accompanied by a good breeze, the flag would crack like a rifle shot and could be heard at a long distance.

No further attempt was made by the opposing party to excel the efforts of the Whigs in the matter of flags and flagstaffs, and thus ended a rivalry which engrossed the attention of the town for many weeks.

### The Campaign of 1856.

The demise of the old Whig organization was followed by the birth of the Republican party which came into national existence early in 1856, or immediately upon the close of the brief but brilliant career of the Know Nothings. In that year the Democrats of New Hampshire were beaten in the presidential contest for the first time since the early days of the republic. The new party and its principles became very popular as the presidential campaign advanced and when the election returns came in it was found that the Fremont and Dayton candidates for electors had majorities of five thousand or more over the Buchanan and Breckinridge ticket. In the campaign of that year street parades and torchlight processions were first introduced here, and they have been the conspicuous features of every campaign since that time.

The local events attending the Lincoln campaign of 1860 and those which have followed are of such recent date that it is hardly necessary to call attention to them now. A generation hence some reminiscent citizen may be able to write an interesting chapter regarding them for the benefit of his youthful friends.

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### AN OLD-TIME DEBATING CLUB.

#### "The Keene Forensic Society and Lyceum."

While examining a collection of old documents and papers, recently, the writer discovered the records of a de-

bating society formed in Keene in 1829. The organization took the title above quoted and was comprised of the leading men of the town, eighty-one of whom appear to have signed the constitution of the society at its first meeting on the 3d of July in the year above named. These eighty-one names are still familiar in this community, nearly all of them being associated with the religious, educational and business interests of the town for many years subsequent to the formation of this society. The names as they stand upon the records are as follows:

Salma Hale.	Gustavus A. Wright.
Z. S. Barstow.	Phinehas Fiske.
T. R. Sullivan.	Nathaniel Dana.
Joel Parker.	William Jennings.
John Elliot.	Abijah W. Kingsbury.
Thos. M. Edwards.	D. Bradford.
Aaron Hall.	William Dinsmoor.
Elijah Parker.	Joseph Marsh.
John Prentiss.	B. F. Adams.
Justus Perry.	J. Dorr.
Samuel A. Gerould.	S. Prentiss Cobb.
Horatio Prentiss.	F. Faulkner.
Nahum Stone.	Jesse Corbett.
James Wilson, Jr.	Josiah W. Horr.
A. H. Bennett.	Azel Wlder.
George Tilden.	V. Carter.
Timothy Hall.	R. Montague.
Charles Lamson.	Oliver Holman.
John F. Hale.	William King.
Jona. F. Locke.	G. C. Dean.
John Hatch.	John G. Thatchier.
J. B. Dousman.	Albert Godfrey.
George Blaisdell.	F. C. Watkins.
Isaac Rand.	Henry Willard.
S. Dinsmoor, Jr.	Everett Newcomb.
Sumner Wheeler.	P. Henderson.
Daniel Watson, Jr.	John H. Fuller.
William Lamson.	Nathaniel Evans.
W. E. Dunbar.	Parton Skinner.
John C. Hatch.	A. G. Skinner.
A. Harrington.	Isaac Sturtevant.
J. Henry Elliot.	B. F. Tilden.
J. M. Blake.	John C. Mason.
Caas. P. Perkins.	John Orcutt.
Quincy Wheeler.	Milton Kimball.
Eliphalet Briggs.	David Dutton.
John W. Briggs.	L. H. Briggs.
Charles Kingsbury.	O. R. Stevens.
A. Holman.	N. Bishop.
Lucie Nurse.	W. P. Wheeler.

Of all these prominent and influential men only one, it is believed, is alive today—Hon. J. H. Elliot, who is still a resident of Keene. Doubtless many others became members of the

society during the thirteen years of its existence, but their names do not appear as signers of the constitution.

The first meeting of the society was called to order by Hon. John Prentiss, and the following named gentlemen were elected as its officers: Hon. Salma Hale, president; Gen. Justus Perry and Capt. Aaron Hall, vice presidents; Col. James Wilson, Jr., secretary; Timothy Hall, treasurer; Rev. Z. S. Barstow, Rev. T. R. Sullivan, Col. James Wilson, Jr., and T. M. Edwards, Esq., directors.

The exercises of the association, as declared in its constitution, consisted of "forensic disputations" upon such subjects as were deemed expedient by the directors, "excepting always that no question of controversial theology be admitted." The discussions embraced a wide range of subjects, as may be inferred from a partial list submitted by the directors at one of the meetings and which included the following:

Has Congress the right to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia?

Ought there to be test acts to exclude infidels from public office?

Ought the duties imposed by the tariff laws to be diminished?

Can the immortality of the soul be proved from the light of nature?

Do the interests of religion require a new translation of the Bible?

Ought all religions to be tolerated?

Ought property to be a qualification for exercising the right of suffrage in a republic?

Would a national bank be beneficial to the country?

Do spectres ever appear?

Ought the immigration of foreigners to be restrained by law?

Is it good policy in our government to encourage manufactures?

Would it be advantageous to the public and to Keene to construct a railway from Boston through Keene to the Connecticut river?

These and many other subjects were carefully considered at the various meetings, and, judging from the meagre records of the debates, were made highly interesting by the talented speakers who took part in the discussions. Some of the sentiments uttered upon these questions present a strong contrast to those expressed by the same gentlemen in after years. Thus, when the subject of slavery was before the lyceum, Mr. Barstow is reported as saying that "the people of New England have no right to meddle with the subject at all. Interference with it is only 'casting fire-brands, arrows and death' to the South." He believed, however, that slavery should be abolished in the District of Columbia and that it was "justifiable in us to work for that end." In after years Mr. Barstow became quite a strong advocate of emancipation and preached some excellent abolition sermons in which he strongly denounced slavery as a national curse and a sin against God.

The elder Mr. Prentiss, also, took about the same view of this question as did Mr. Barstow. He is recorded as saying that "to try to require the South to give up from five to seven millions of property would only create anarchy, confusion and a dissolution of the Union." He conceded the right of the people to meet together and discuss the subject, but denied that they were privileged to publish inflammatory articles that would excite the slaveholders. And yet, from the time when "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was first issued until emancipation was consummated Mr. Prentiss was in full

sympathy with the abolition movement. He was the first person in Keene to read Mrs. Stowe's wonderful story of "Uncle Tom," which he ordered from Boston. The morning after he came in possession of it he called at the "Keene Bookstore" with the two paper-covered volumes under his arm and informed his friends there that he had been converted to abolitionism by reading this story and that he had spent the previous day and half the night in a perusal of it. He also declared that Mrs. Stowe had dealt the slaveholders the hardest blow ever sustained by the advocates of the "peculiar institution," and predicted that he should live to see the day when slavery would be abolished in America—a prediction which was happily fulfilled.

One of the last discussions held by the society was upon the subject of the proposed building of a railroad from Fitchburg to Keene. Hon. Salma Hale and Hon. John Prentiss supported the project, while J. H. Elliot and others opposed it. The decision of the meeting, according to the records, was in favor of carrying out the projected enterprise, and no doubt local interest in the question was first awakened through the action of this society.

Other enterprises and reforms were originated and given impetus through the discussions and lectures at the meetings of this society, and many young men became accustomed to speaking in public by participating in its proceedings. Such an institution if in existence here today would prove of incalculable advantage to our young men, and the entire community would be benefited thereby. Who will move to revive "The Keene Forensic Society and Lyceum?"

### STAGING AND TEAMING

#### In the Days Prior to the Building of Railroads.

Many residents of Keene are able to recall the lively scenes on our streets in the days when staging and teaming were profitable enterprises and engaged the attention of a large number of people along the principal avenues of travel between Boston and Northern New England. Previous to the opening of the Cheshire railroad it was by no means unusual to see five or six large stage coaches standing in front of the Cheshire House at about seven o'clock in the morning, to each of which was attached a team of four or six horses, awaiting the moment of departure for their respective destinations. The preparations for starting, together with a curiosity to see the strangers who were travelling by these public conveyances, always drew a crowd of idle men and boys about the hotel and attracted more or less the attention of all located in the vicinity. The arrivals and departures of railroad passenger trains at the present day attract many people to the station who have no other object in view than to gaze upon strange faces and observe what others are doing, and the same kind of curiosity was manifested in old stage coach times. The Cheshire House porch, then extending completely across the front of the building, was usually filled with spectators whenever a stage left or arrived at the hotel, giving that section of the village a lively appearance.

The drivers of the coaches were a very popular class of people and received many favors at the hands of travellers and citizens. They were honest, faithful men and were often entrusted with large sums of money by merchants who had dealings with

Boston parties and others along the lines followed by the stages. Among these knights of the whip were some of the men who subsequently became railroad conductors or expressmen, although most of them disappeared from this community soon after the cars supplanted the coaches. The drivers best known to the writer were residents of Keene or vicinity and a list of them embraces such familiar names as Capt. William Marsh (afterward the stage company's agent here), Amos Nicholas, Edward Pennock, Ira and Hiram Hodgkins, Peletiah Armstrong, Morris Miller, Josiah and Edward Boutell, William Huntington, Gardner Hall, Josiah Whitcomb, Harrison Clark, John Brown, and a few others of less note, all of whom were of a jovial, kind-hearted disposition and immensely popular with the boys as well as with older people.

Another noted driver, who afterward became a millionaire, was Nathaniel White, who for a short time drove the Keene and Concord stage. He died in Concord only a few years ago, the richest man in the state and universally loved and respected. Mr. White was a great admirer of horses and never lost interest in the occupation in which his early life was spent. It was the writer's good fortune to accompany him to the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876, arriving there one Saturday night after a week of hard work and excitement at the Republican National convention at Cincinnati. At daylight the next morning Mr. White arose and proceeded to a livery stable where he ordered a team of four horses attached to an old-fashioned stage coach for a drive around Fairmount park. Taking his friends aboard at their hotel, he mounted the box, took the reins from the hands of the coachman and dashed away in fine

style. For an hour Mr. White kept the team going at a lively pace, and on returning to the hotel for breakfast he remarked that he had not experienced such a pleasant drive for years.

In fair weather during the summer and autumn seasons travelling by stage through this section of the country was truly delightful. The grand scenery along the route of the stages won the admiration of all strangers. It is related of Daniel Webster that when visiting Keene in 1840 he extended his journey to Vermont, going by stage through Walpole. On reaching the height of land, where a magnificent view of the Green Mountains and the Connecticut river and valley is obtained, Mr. Webster requested the driver to stop his team for a few minutes that he might step out of the coach for a better survey of the landscape. The driver replied that he had the United States mail on board and could not detain it unnecessarily, at the same time suggesting that if Mr. Webster would take a seat on the box beside him he would have a better view of the scenery. The suggestion was acted upon with alacrity and the great statesman and the proud stage-driver rode side by side during the remainder of the trip.

#### Teaming with Horses.

Another of the interesting sights on our streets and along the stage routes was the periodical departure and return of numerous teams for the transportation of goods and merchandise between Boston and points as far north as Canada line. These usually consisted of huge baggage wagons to which were attached four, six or eight horses, according to the weight of the load. Several of these teams were owned in Keene, three by Laton

Martin, and others by Charles Dwin nel, Isaiah Robbins, Charles Towne, Calvin Benton, and a Mr. Hazelton. Mr. Martin had the reputation of being the best teamster on the road, and in this business he laid the foundation of an ample competency. His horses, large, powerful animals, always looked sleek and were capable of hauling immense loads over the roads between Keene and Boston. Mr. Martin is still a resident of Keene, hale and hearty in his advanced age, and enjoying the fruits of a long and honorable business career. Like Mr. White, above referred to, he is a great admirer of good horses, and in pleasant weather is often seen driving about town behind a spirited pair.

Teams that went further north were seen on the road every day of the week, Sundays not excepted. The old Sun Tavern on Court street was a favorite stopping place for these teamsters, and frequently several of them would be quartered there for the night at the same time, making lively work for the kitchen girls as well as the stable boys. The opening of the railroad of course ended the heavy teaming with horses, and at this day an eight-horse team of any kind is rarely seen.

#### **The First Express.**

The first Keene man to engage in the express business was Francis Davis, who is still a resident of this city. In his young days Mr. Davis spent two or three years in the West Indies and South America, returning home early in 1845 somewhat broken in health through an attack of yellow fever. His physician advised him to engage in some employment requiring exercise in the open air as a means of restoring his health. Consequently Mr. Davis conceived the

idea of establishing an express between Keene and Boston, and in the month of the following May he made his first trip over the stage route via Fitchburg with a two-horse team carrying small parcels and light articles that could be more rapidly transported in a team of that kind than by heavy teams and stages. The enterprise was successful from the start, and in a short time it became necessary to increase the number of his weekly trips and to add another pair of horses to his team. Naturally there was some competition between the stage and express companies, as is shown by the following incident related by Mr. Davis: Just previous to the meeting of congress in 1845 there was much interest manifested in the forthcoming first message of President Polk. Father Prentiss, then editor of the Sentinel, asked Mr. Davis to procure for him a copy of the message in Boston, promising a reward of five dollars if he would get it here in advance of the mail, which came by stage. "Gard." Hall, one of the stage drivers, heard of the matter and remarked that he would "make Davis earn that five dollars"—a remark equivalent to a challenge for a race between the stage and express teams. On the day the message was procurable in Boston Davis and Hall left that city at about the same hour, each determined to reach Keene ahead of the other. The express got the lead and kept it the entire distance, arriving here nearly an hour ahead of the schedule time. Mr. Prentiss stood on the Cheshire House steps awaiting Mr. Davis's arrival, and after handing over the reward he hastened to return to his office with the message in his possession. Hardly had he turned about, however, before he saw the stage coming up Main street,

the horses on the run and covered with foam. Waving the paper over his head Mr. Prentiss shouted, "You won it fairly, Mr. Davis, but it was a close shave."

When the Fitchburg railroad was completed, Mr. Davis sold his business to Mr. Bigelow of Boston, who was then running an express over that line. On the completion of the Cheshire road, Mr. Bigelow sold out to Fisk & Rice, Mr. Fisk, being a resident of Keene, having secured the privilege of doing the railroad express business between Fitchburg and Bellows Falls through the friendly aid of Hon. T. M. Edwards, then president of the Cheshire road. Subsequently, the business went into the hands of the American Express company, which is today the largest and wealthiest corporation of the kind in the world.

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### GLASS FACTORIES.

#### **Business Enterprises that Once Interested Many Keene People.**

The manufacture of glass is one of the most interesting industries ever pursued by the people of this country, and, under certain conditions of tariff protection, one of the most profitable because of the constantly widening market for the products of the glass manufactories. Few people in New England, unless they have travelled considerably, have ever witnessed the operations of a gang of workmen in a glass factory, and at the present day this statement will apply to the people of almost every State in the Union. "No material invented by man is to be compared with glass in the service it has rendered," says a writer upon the subject of glass-making, and surely there can be no limit to the demands for an article which is susceptible of being put to such a

variety of uses. The first glass factory in the United States of which we have a precise account was established in the town of Temple, N. H., in 1780, but it was in operation only a few months, being destroyed by fire the following winter. In this factory only bottles and ordinary ware were made. The first window glass manufactured in this country was made in Boston in 1793. It was of excellent quality and became quite celebrated, but the enterprise finally failed through mismanagement.

But it is not my purpose to give a history of glass making, nor will I attempt a description of the process pursued in the factories which turn out this valuable and essential product. A brief mention, however, of the glass manufacturing enterprises that once existed in Keene may be of interest to some readers of the *Sentinel*, especially those who remember the days when works of this kind were in operation here.

In 1840, and probably for twenty years prior and subsequent to that date, a huge wooden building stood on a piece of ground a few rods west of the present county jail on Washington street. It was surrounded by smaller buildings, sheds, stables and immense piles of hemlock wood disposed in such a way as to form avenues through the grounds, giving the locality the appearance of a miniature village. The buildings were blackened by the clouds of smoke which issued from a wide opening in the roof of the main building, day and night, for about five days of each week during the winter season, reminding one of the eruptions of Vesuvius and requiring little stretch of the imagination to make the huge structure seem like a real volcano. The interior presented a still more weird spectacle,

for here the mysterious process of glass making was in constant operation in its various stages, outside interest in which centered upon that portion of the work performed by the "blowers," a class of workmen expert in manipulating the molten, lava-like mixture contained in the big cauldrons and by means of the blow-pipe forming it into hollow cylinders for other workmen to finally convert into merchantable window glass. A material diminution of the volume of smoke issuing from the building's "crater" was always a signal to the young people that the melting process was completed and that "blowing" was about to begin. At such times the factory would be crowded, far into the night, with spectators who never tired of watching the workmen who manipulated the blow-pipes. Trousers, slippers and a tight-fitting woolen shirt comprised a glass-blower's dress when at work, the tremendous heat from the glowing melting-pots being almost unbearable. Ten or twelve of these workmen stationed along either side of the big furnace made a picturesque scene as they alternately dipped their blow-pipes into the liquid fire and swung the glowing mass that adhered around and above their heads, while boys with water pails and dippers continually passed to and fro to relieve the burning thirst which the heat engendered among those so directly exposed to it. With the mouths of the melting-pots open, the whole interior of the building was lighted up with a glow that gave the appearance of a conflagration, making a startling impression on one not accustomed to the scene.

The blowers were, generally, foreigners who learned the art of glass-making in the old country. They commanded large wages for those times

and it was said of them that they made more money than the proprietors of the works realized from their investments. Among the first-class workmen in this establishment were some who made Keene their permanent home. John Clinesmith, Charles Hirsch, Nicholas Hilt, Henry Lange, Augustus Smith, and a few others whose names are not now recalled, were of this number, but no one of those named is now living. Of the others employed about the establishment we remember John A. Drummer and Charles Lovejoy, who acted as firemen, or "stokers" as they were called; Henry Gregory and his two sons, William and Frank, who worked in the cutting department; also Edward Holman, William Howard and Stephen Sibley, all of whom seemed to be permanent fixtures of the establishment, serving in some capacity or other up to the time the works were closed.

The business gave employment to a large number of people besides those directly engaged in the various departments of the manufactory. Teamsters and wood-choppers were busy a greater part of the year in providing fuel for the furnaces, while others gathered sand and hard wood ashes for use in preparing the glass mixture. For many years it was a profitable enterprise and a great benefit to the town. The proprietors' names are not recalled in full, but at different times the business was conducted by Adams, Holman & Dutton, Aaron Appleton, John Elliot, Oliver Holman, B. F. Adams, J. D. Colony, and probably several others whose financial interests were identified with those of the gentlemen named.

#### A Bottle Factory.

Another branch of this business was

established on Marlboro street, near the old Catholic church, more than fifty years ago, by Perry, Wheeler & Co. This was for the manufacture of bottles, large numbers of which were produced annually for a few years, or until their manufacture became unprofitable, probably by reason of foreign competition. The attractions at this establishment were not equal to those at the window glass factory, yet it was resorted to very frequently by all the boys and girls in the village, so fascinating were the mysterious operations attending the business of glass-blowing. Here, too, was a cash market for hard wood ashes which many a boy highly appreciated, as it often afforded him means for procuring a pair of skates or a ticket to the circus when all other resources failed.

A newspaper article regarding American glass factories was recently noted in which the surprising statement was made that "but four of these large establishments are today in operation in the United States," which, if correct, leads one to wonder why an industry of so much importance and of such vast consequences to the working people of the country is not adequately protected by our tariff laws.

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#### QUAINT CHARACTERS

##### Whose Home Was in Keene a Half Century Ago.

Among the writer's early recollections of Keene are some concerning events in which at least a few readers of the *Sentinel* will feel an interest when their attention is called to them by one whose citizenship has been contemporaneous with that of their own for a period of fifty years or more. Doubtless all who are thus referred to have a distinct remembrance

of what is here related, and if the writer's memory is at fault they or any one of them can feel at liberty to correct his errors.

Fifty years ago Keene numbered among her inhabitants several people whose habits and eccentricities made them conspicuous objects in the community. Although somewhat degraded by nature and habits, they were familiarly known to nearly every citizen, and especially to the young people who regarded them as legitimate sources of endless amusement and fun.

#### Anna Banks.

Prominent among these characters was an old woman named Anna Banks, who lived in a hut on the old Gilsum road, a hundred rods or so above the glass factory that stood on the present jail lot. She was a misshapen, wrinkled old crone and obtained a living by telling the fortunes of the young people who flocked to her weird domicil in great numbers. Her appearance on the street attracted attention, as she was a veritable "Meg Merilis" in style of figure and dress, as well as vocation. Her patrons included nearly every young person in town, many of whom visited her often for the sake of a lark. Usually, the old woman was good-natured and permitted all manner of fun in her presence, but at times she resented undue hilarity, especially when her gin bottle was empty, and then it was somewhat dangerous to offend her.

The roof of Old Anna's hut extended almost to the ground, so that it was an easy matter for one to climb up to the huge chimney, where a view of a considerable portion of the interior could be obtained. A kettle of boiling water usually hung upon a crane

in the fireplace, and the boys (and girls as well) thought it nice fun to quietly ascend the roof on a dark evening and drop sticks and stones into the big kettle below. On one occasion when a party was indulging in this kind of sport, Old Anna seized a large dipper and filling it with boiling water rushed out and liberally besprinkled two or three of the mischievous party who were unable to reach the ground in time to escape her vengeance.

"Old Anna" died some forty years ago, yet there are many people still living in Keene who have a vivid and pleasant recollection of the merry times they enjoyed in the home of this eccentric old woman, and who will never forget the impressive manner in which she was wont to assure every girl patron that her future husband would be a "dark-complexioned man with lots of money," and that she was to have "a new pair of shoes in a few days."

#### Richard and Lucinda Suglin.

A few rods north of Old Anna's hut lived a negro family named Suglin, the conspicuous members of which were the father, Richard, and the oldest daughter, Lucinda. Richard was an athlete and enjoyed a fight as much as he did a nice dinner of chicken or lamb, of which delicacies he was exceedingly fond. He always attended the musters and trainings of the militia of those days and was sure to be in a fight with some one very soon after arriving on the field. It was rare indeed that he got the worst of such a contest, for he was quick and powerful and seemed to be totally oblivious to the dreadful blows which were sometimes rained upon his woolly head and ebony face. Ordinarily, Richard was peaceable and good-na-

tured, fighting being indulged in purely for recreation and generally without provocation.

Lucinda, the daughter, inherited some of her father's peculiarities, especially his fighting propensity and love of frolic. She could sing and dance quite attractively, and did not hesitate to spar with any young man who dared to stand up before her. The "accomplishments" which characterized Richard and his daughter, however, were not appreciated by his neighbors, all of whom seemed to rejoice when the family emigrated to another state. Since their departure the raising of lambs and poultry in the vicinity of their old home has been attended with less loss than it was in the days when Richard used to attribute the disappearance of this kind of property to the depredations of hawks and foxes.

#### Justus Tozer.

Another conspicuous figure on our streets was that of Justus Tozer, a little old man who was famous for his ready wit and ability to construct rhymes on any subject suggested to him. Although he lived to a good old age, it is probable that at his decease he had not drawn a sober breath for forty years. He was a harmless, good-natured old man, and a great favorite with the young people who gathered about him whenever he appeared on the street and eagerly listened to his quaint rhymes and witty remarks. When importuned for a rhyme, it came on the instant and without hesitation. Thus on one occasion when a bright-eyed little girl asked a favor of this kind he at once replied,

"Miss Catura,  
You look like fury."

Noticing that he had offended the lit-

tle miss by reflecting upon her personal appearance he immediately added,

"But your eyes are as bright,  
As the stars of night."

This mollified the injured feelings of his little friend and ever after he was sure of at least a penny whenever they met on the street. One day when asked to make a rhyme, with himself for a subject, he immediately rendered the following:

"Justus Tozer is a poser,  
He's a drunken skunk;  
It takes a gill to wet his bill  
And a pint to get him drunk."

Tozer had no home of his own and in the summer season his sleeping place was usually in some barn or deserted house. Even a dry goods box in front of some store would often afford him all the sleeping accommodations he wanted. In winter he would find lodgment with some humane family, paying his way by sawing wood and doing chores about the house and barn. He was kindly cared for in the brief illness which ended with his life and many expressions of regret were heard when it was announced that he was dead.

#### "Sol." Sumner.

Of the same unfortunate class with Justus Tozer was a ragged, filthy and extremely repulsive old man named "Sol." Sumner, who prowled about the town in search of means whereby he could satisfy his appetite for rum and tobacco. He had none of the redeeming qualities that made Tozer's presence endurable, but otherwise the two men were similar in habits and mode of life. They were not very friendly, however, as might be inferred from Tozer's frequent remark that he "considered it a disgrace to speak to such a man as Old Sol."

Many of our citizens can recall the features and general appearance of Sumner, as he was for many years a conspicuous and most disgusting object in the community. He disappeared more than a generation ago, and the general public was satisfied to believe that death had ended his miserable career.

Several other noted individuals resided in Keene contemporaneously with those here referred to, but they were of an entirely different class of citizens and a brief notice of their peculiarities and amiable traits may at some time appear in these columns.

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#### THE OLD MILITIA.

##### "Keene Light," "West Light," and Ash Swamp Rifles.

Many people in various parts of Cheshire county have a vivid remembrance of some of the military organizations existing in this section of the state in the early years of the present century, and no doubt the publication of a full history of each company would be exceedingly interesting to almost every citizen, old and young; but such a history cannot be embodied in a newspaper article, where space is limited. A mere sketch of two or three of the prominent military organizations of olden times is all that can be given here, and even this must encroach upon columns usually devoted to current history and a record of passing local events.

Military organizations were instituted very early in the history of our country and even before the Revolutionary war. The British nation was so opposed to American independence that at the close of the seven years' struggle our people felt the necessity

of being prepared for a renewal of the attack at any time. The war of 1812 strengthened this feeling and children grew up with a military spirit and a readiness to defend their rights. All of the original states enacted laws requiring able-bodied men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years to be equipped and ready for service. New Hampshire was not behind her sister states in this matter. As early as 1813 there was a movement which culminated in a complete military organization throughout the state, the troops belonging to Keene, Walpole, Westmoreland, Surry, Gilsum and Sullivan forming the Twentieth Regiment. Many of the commissioned officers of the regular militia knew nothing of military tactics and oftentimes the marches and manoeuvres of their commands were ludicrous in the extreme. The companies were subdivided into sections at random, no attention being paid to the height of the soldier, so that it was not unusual to see a stalwart six-footer sandwiched between two short men who looked like little boys in comparison with their giant comrade-in-arms. Each company had a band of musicians, usually consisting of fifers and drummers, while occasionally a bugle player was added to the corps, making a very attractive feature of the display. The "independent" companies, as they were called, were uniformed and generally well drilled, and it is of some of these organizations that the writer proposes to speak in this article.

#### **Keene Light Infantry.**

From various sources, but mainly from the records in the Adjutant General's office in Concord, it is learned that an independent military organization was formed in Keene as early as 1813. The company took the name of

Keene Light Infantry, and its first commander was Isaac Parker, who was commissioned June 7th of the above named year. A full list of the officers of this company during its existence would gladly be given here did space allow, but the names of the captains with dates of their commissions must be the limit of details in this direction. The commanders succeeding Capt. Parker were commissioned as follows: Noah Smith, June 4, 1816; Nathaniel Sprague, Dec. 18, 1816; Jesse Corbett, May 13, 1817; Joel Parker, Nov. 13, 1819; James Wilson, Jr., Jan. 9, 1821; Nathan Bassett, July 15, 1823; George Brown, Jan. 25, 1825; Daniel Towns, Jr., Sept. 10, 1827; William Dinsmoor, March 6, 1829; Joshua Wyman, Sept. 21, 1829; James Wilson, Jr., May 31, 1830; Robert Wilson, Aug. 22, 1833; Sumner Carpenter, Aug. 7, 1835; Walter Taylor, Jr., June 21, 1838; George D. Dort, June 5, 1839; Daniel Read, Aug. 8, 1842; William Swan, April 24, 1843; Charles Batcheller, May 4, 1844; Frank S. Fiske, Aug. 22, 1846; Samuel A. Gerould, Jr., May 5, 1847; Robert Wilson, Aug. 23, 1848; Dauphin W. Buckminster, Aug. 30, 1849; Eben G. Ball, June 18, 1851. Of these officers four are still living, viz: Walter Taylor of Bellows Falls, Geo. D. Dort of Keene, Frank S. Fiske of Boston, and Samuel A. Gerould of Keene. The company was from first to last a very popular institution and always stood high in the estimation of military gentlemen throughout the state. Its commanders and subordinate officers were selected from among the most popular men in town, while the ranks were filled with young men from stores, shops and farms who took great pride in the organization. Two of its commanders—the Wilsons—had a powerful influence over the men in the ranks, and to

their energy, great popularity and influence was due much of the credit awarded the company for its fine appearance. The same may be truly said of the other commanders, although the degree of influence exercised by them was less marked.

This company soon after its formation had a formidable rival in the neighboring town of Westmoreland, where a splendid military organization was maintained many years. Each claimed to be the superior of the other, while in fact there was little difference between them. Their uniforms were handsome, substantial and similar in style. Certain it was, "Keene Light" and "West Light" were the bright particular stars of every muster season as long as their organizations lasted. The Keene company took special pride in the possession of a number of handsome tents which were captured from the British in the war of 1812. These tents are still in existence, being owned by some of our citizens who paid fabulous prices for them when the company's effects were finally disposed of. Many interesting episodes growing out of the rivalry between these two "crack" companies might be related in this connection, but time and space forbid.

#### Westmoreland Light Infantry.

A transcript from the records in the adjutant general's office shows that an independent company was formed in the town of Westmoreland very soon after the close of the last war with England, under the name of "Westmoreland Light Infantry." The first captain of this company was William Pierce, who was commissioned March 22, 1815, serving three years as appears from the record. The subsequent commanders were commis-

sioned as follows: Linus Aldrich, May 28, 1818; Larkin Baker, April 3, 1820; Harry Green, Aug. 7, 1822; Levi Green, March 12, 1825; Daniel Farr, April 19, 1826; Charles F. Brooks, Jan. 15, 1827; Joseph Wood, March 26, 1828; Charles F. Brooks, Aug. 22, 1828; William Brooks, Sept. 23, 1828; Tileston A. Barker, Sept. 21, 1829; Prentiss Daggett, Sept. 5, 1831; Charles Butterfield, March 4, 1835; Robert Britton, Sept. 2, 1836; Levi Barker, April 6, 1838; Tileston A. Barker, July 13, 1839; Artemas Knight, 2d, April 23, 1844; Daniel W. Patten, March 25, 1845; Holland Bennett, July 9, 1846; Tileston A. Barker, Sept. 7, 1847. The last named Captain appears to have served from 1847 until the disbandment of the company, or about ten years in all. This company was one of the best military organizations in the state and its excellent reputation was maintained up to the time of its disbandment, or for a period of about thirty-five years. Its ranks were ever overflowing with the very best material for the making of soldiers — stalwart young farmers whose patriotism and love of military display knew no bounds. It was also highly favored by having the support of the leading business men of the town and especially such energetic and enthusiastic citizens as Tileston A. and Levi Barker, who seemed to be imbued with true military genius and to whose efficient services the great prosperity of the organization was mainly due, especially during the last few years of its existence. The Barkers stood in the same relation to "West Light" as did the Wilsons to "Keene Light." Both were very popular locally, widely recognized as authority in military matters, and each rose to the rank of colonel. The elder of these two broth-

ers, Tileston A. Barker, was one of the most efficient drill-masters in the state and his services in that capacity were in great demand as the training and muster seasons approached. His subsequent career in the late war is too well remembered to need mention here. Suffice it to say, he made an honorable record and endeared himself to every Union soldier who came in contact with him. His brother, Col. Levi Barker, is still living, enjoying a serene and happy old age at his home in Worcester, Mass., where he interests himself in military matters, being an honorary member of one of the fine companies existing in that city. His record of sixty-two years' continuous connection with military organizations probably has no equal in this state. Only one other of the old commanders of "West Light," Col. D. W. Patten, is living today: the others are now mustered on "the other shore."

#### Ash Swamp Rifles.

Early in the year of 1842 a military company consisting of about forty men was formed in the west part of Keene, then known as Ash Swamp. This was a company of riflemen, an organization which was well maintained up to the time of the disbandment of the state militia by legislative enactment. Col. Levi Barker was then in command of the regiment and encouraged and aided the new company through his personal efforts in procuring the necessary armament from the state. The company was successively commanded by Benjamin Gurler, Sewall Gurler, Asa S. White, Wm. K. Goodnow, Charles W. Wyman, Royal Britton and Alexander H. Grimes. The lieutenants, in the order of their appointment, were Sewall Gurler, Asa S. White, Nelson N. Saw-

yer, Joseph G. Perry, Charles Nash, Jr., and Thomas Grimes. Ensigns, Asa S. White, Asa C. Thayer, Andrew H. Towne, Wm. K. Goodnow, Charles W. Wyman, Charles Nash, Jr., Alexander H. Grimes, Alfred S. Blake.

This company was composed of excellent material and made a good appearance on parade, although the green frock uniform and low hat or cap gave the men a diminutive look when contrasted with the light infantry soldiers in their dress suits surmounted by tall hats bearing fountain plumes. Had the militia laws remained unchanged, this company would have attained high rank as a military organization as it was composed of the very best material, almost every individual member being a substantial farmer or farmer's son. Two at least of its old commanders, Captain Wyman and Captain Grimes, still live in Keene, engaged in active business pursuits and enjoying the esteem of their fellow citizens.

#### An Artillery Company.

One other Keene company deserves notice in this connection. It was an artillery company organized in 1842 and composed of boys from twelve to sixteen years of age. Its officers were John L. W. Tyler, captain; William Marsh, Frank Holmes and George H. Davis, subordinate officers. The organization did not continue long, but during its existence it was a very popular institution, liberally encouraged by the older citizens. Captain Tyler was endowed with true military genius and his command received many high compliments from distinguished military gentlemen. The company mustered with the Twentieth Regiment in the autumn of 1842. It was well uniformed and equipped with wooden swords and a real cannon. It

made such a fine appearance that the colonel gave it the right of the line on the muster field, while the reviewing officer bestowed upon it flattering words of commendation in his address to the regiment.

At least two of the officers of this company—Captain Tyler and Lieutenant Davis—are still living. The former occupies a lucrative position as professor of penmanship in a western institution of learning, while the latter continues at his life-long employment as compositor in the office of one of the Boston daily papers.

#### **Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels of the Twentieth Regiment.**

It is impracticable to give a full list of the Twentieth Regiment field officers, but the names of the colonels and lieutenant colonels are still so familiar to the people of Cheshire county that their publication here seems to be demanded.

The first man commissioned as colonel (as appears from the records) was William M. Bond, his appointment being dated July 4, 1816. His successors were commissioned as follows: Isaac Field, May 16, 1817; Simeon Cobb, 2d, June 23, 1819 (subsequently promoted to be a brigadier general); Justus Ferry, July 5, 1822 (promoted to a generalship); James Wilson, Jr., June 30, 1826; Benjamin F. Adams, July 15, 1829; Samuel Gordon, June 24, 1831; Tileston A. Barker, June 25, 1833 (declined); James Wilson, Jr., Aug. 5, 1833 (promoted to a generalship); Charles Butterfield, June 27, 1835; Robert Wilson, Sept. 4, 1837; Levi Barker, June 27, 1839; John Cowdery, June 20, 1844; George Hager, June 30, 1845; Virgil A. Kimball, July 6, 1846; Daniel W. Patten, July 3, 1847; Daniel W. Bill, June 24, 1848 (promoted to a generalship.)

Lieutenant colonels were commissioned in the following order: William M. Bond, June 23, 1815; Isaac Field, Dec. 9, 1816; Justus Perry, June 23, 1819; Seth Hall, Jr., July 5, 1822; Thomas F. Ames, June 16, 1823; James Wilson, Jr., May 17, 1824; Jehiel Day, June 30, 1826; Benjamin F. Adams, June 18, 1828; David Buffum, July 1, 1829; Samuel Towns, June 24, 1831; Bradley Leach, Oct. 4, 1831; James Wilson, Jr., June 25, 1833; Eliphalet R. Webster, Aug. 5, 1833; Charles Butterfield, June 27, 1835; Robert Wilson, June 27, 1835; Nehemiah Hart, Sept. 4, 1837; Levi Barker, June 27, 1839; William Wellington, Jan. 17, 1842; George D. Dort, July 18, 1842; John Cowdery, July 1, 1843; George Hager, June 20, 1844; Abel Starkey, June 30, 1845; Daniel W. Patten, July 6, 1846; Daniel W. Bill, July 8, 1847; Joseph W. Briggs, June 24, 1848; Daniel Smith, Dec. 27, 1848; Francis Brown, Nov. 1, 1850.

#### **Going to Muster.**

The time for "going to muster" was generally regarded as a season for unrestrained hilarity and depredation upon the orchards and melon patches along the route to military headquarters. All through the night preceding muster day the highways leading from the neighboring towns were alive with men and boys who were untiring in their efforts to keep up a continual din resembling that attending the advent of the 4th of July in these modern times. Following in the wake of the musters were pedlars, sleight-of-hand performers, gamblers and rum sellers. Fighting among the crowd of roughs always assembled on such occasions was a common occurrence, sometimes requiring the interference of the troops in order that quiet might be restored.

Every year these riotous demonstrations increased until at last they became almost unbearable; and by this reason more than any other, muster days came into disrepute and a repeal or radical revision of the militia laws was demanded and secured. And so the glory of the old-time musters departed.

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### THE BASHAW OF BEECH HILL.

A Noted Character Well Remembered  
by Many Citizens.

Mr. Editor:—One of your correspondents, who has kindly criticised some of my descriptions of old time characters, expresses the hope that I continue to give sketches of some of the noted people residing in Keene fifty years ago. As nearly every one of the famous characters of those days has living descendants residing in the community, it is a delicate matter to describe their peculiarities, through fear of giving offense where naught but respectful compliment is intended. One name, however, which "W." suggests as a proper subject for consideration and comment is so generally remembered and pleasurable associated with the history of the town that the risk of offending surviving relatives by thus publicly alluding to it is not too great to be assumed even by the most timid of writers.

#### John Lawrence.

The person above referred to bore the respected name of John Lawrence, and his home was on Beech Hill, directly east of and some two miles distant from Central Square. He was a farmer by occupation and for a long series of years was engaged in stock-raising and agriculture in a most delightful section of the town, elevated several hundred feet above the village

which nestled in the valley below. By nature he was endowed with a brilliant intellect and commanding presence, and had he been privileged in early life to enjoy the educational advantages now so easily obtainable by all classes, he might have made a notable record in some one of the professions and attained a leading position in the community. As it was, he had considerable influence over his neighbors, while many people in the village looked upon him as a man of more than common ability and one whose honesty and integrity none could question. He was a great reader, well informed concerning the political events of the times, and able to express his views on general subjects in a clear and forcible manner.

Often, indeed almost always, when visiting the village Mr. Lawrence would become involved in an argument with some political opponent who, like himself, was wont to vigorously defend the principles of the party to which he belonged. These street discussions always attracted a crowd, as it was well understood that "Uncle John," as Mr. Lawrence was familiarly called, would succeed in turning the laugh upon his opponent however badly he might be worsted in the argument. His quaint remarks and apt quotations were delivered very impressively and with a manly dignity that made them very effective. As illustrations of this it may be proper to quote his expressions on a few occasions. At the time the Whig party celebrated its great victory in 1840, Mr. Lawrence had charge of one of the guns and was very enthusiastic over the work in hand. Becoming considerably excited, he finally trained his gun upon the signboard of Beniah Cooke, then editor of the Chesh-

ire Republican, and discharged the piece at short range, first filling its muzzle with some very soft material scraped up on the street. The result may be easily imagined. The sign-board and its surroundings looked like a section of a farmer's barnyard, while the walk in front of the building was strewn with broken glass. Being remonstrated with for such recklessness Mr. Lawrence exclaimed, "I want Be-niah Cooke and every other Van Buren Democrat in Keene to know that there is a God in Israel!" At one time the project of building a new road over Beech Hill created considerable feeling and became the main issue in the choice of selectmen at one of our town meetings. At the Whig caucus for the nomination of candidates Mr. Lawrence was accosted by a friend as he entered the hall with the inquiry, "Who are your candidates for selectmen, Uncle John?" In his inimitable and earnest manner, and in a tone of voice that could be heard by every one present, he instantly replied, "Any three good Whigs who fear God and are in favor of Beech Hill road!" It is hardly necessary to say that the road referred to was built by the selectmen nominated in that caucus. When the Manchester & Keene railroad was laid out the line ran through a portion of Mr. Lawrence's farm that was covered with sapling pines. The damages awarded him for the land taken proved unsatisfactory and the matter came before the officials for adjustment. The counsel for the road represented that the land was of little value, producing nothing but a thin growth of white pine, blackberry bushes and useless shrubbery. Mr. Lawrence, in reply to this, said, "Gentlemen, those sapling pines, which you have been told are of little value, are

a source of revenue to me. When I need money I cut off a few of them and draw them to the mill, where they bring the cash—just as you rich nabobs cut railroad bond coupons and get them cashed at the bank. Those pine trees are my 'coupons,' gentlemen." His claim for an increase of damages was allowed.

Mr. Lawrence was something of a poet and sometimes advertised his breeding stock in verse which embodied many droll expressions. He playfully assumed the title of "Bashaw of Beech Hill" and appended the same to his signature whenever an advertisement of this kind was issued. The title fitted nicely and it was recognized by the people of Keene to the end of his days.

Mr. Lawrence was hospitable and entertaining in his home and his visitors were greeted with a cordiality that left no suspicion of its genuineness. His natural good humor never deserted him, even in the excitement of a wordy controversy. In many respects he was a remarkable man and those who knew him will readily admit that they never expect to "look upon his like again."

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#### KEENE'S NATAL DAY.

#### Reminiscences of the Centennial Celebration of 1853.

On the 26th of May, 1903, one hundred and fifty years will have elapsed since the settlement of the town of Keene and the organization of its town government. Local public interest in the celebration of a town's birthday is always strong and every citizen takes pride in the event. This fact was amply proved in 1853, when the citizens of Keene very generally participated in the celebration of the one

hundredth anniversary of the settlement of the town. Professional and business men took part in that event, making it a glorious success and insuring for themselves the gratitude of their posterity.

Very few living people have a distinct remembrance of that event and a great majority of those who took part in it have passed away. Of the committees who arranged for the celebration and of the citizens who officiated in the proceedings only four names are today found among those of living men. The surviving quartet is composed of Col. Frank S. Fiske, George A. Wheelock, Rev. W. O. White and George K. Wright. The committees comprised the names of prominent citizens and were as follows:

**On Invitations.**—Samuel Dinsmoor, Thomas M. Edwards, Salma Hale, Levi Chamberlain, Charles G. Adams, Josiah Colony, John W. Prentiss, John Elliot, Charles Lamson, Thomas F. Ames.

**On Reception.**—Salma Hale, John Prentiss, John H. Fuller, George Tilden, Noah R. Cooke, William S. Briggs, James B. Elliot.

**On Place and Arrangements for Exercises.**—F. A. Faulkner, Stewart Hastings, Adolphus Wright, Abel Blake, Samuel Wood, Enos Holbrook, Luther Nurse, Samuel Towns, 2d.

**On Place and Arrangements for Collation.**—Benjamin F. Adams, Thomas Thompson, William Dinsmoor, James Buffum, George B. Twitchell, Daniel Watson, Kindall Crossfield, Josiah Sawyer, George K. Wright, Charles Chase.

**To Prepare Sentiments.**—John H. El-

liot, Geo. G. Ingersoll, William P. Wheeler, Edward Farrar, Farnum F. Lane.

**On Music.**—William Dinsmoor, Virgil M. Kimball, Joseph W. Briggs, Albert Godfrey, Harvey A. Bill, William S. Hutchins.

**On Finance.**—Sumner Wheeler, John Elliot, Joshua D. Colony, Thomas H. Leverett, Charles S. Faulkner.

The officers were selected from among leading citizens whose names are still familiar in every Keene household and whose influence in this community was unbounded. The list is as follows:

**President.**—Thomas M. Edwards.

**Vice Presidents.**—John Prentiss, Samuel Dinsmoor, Salma Hale, Charles G. Adams, John Elliot, John Wood, Josiah Colony, Elijah Parker, Timothy Hall, Calvin Chapman, Joseph Perry, Michael Metcalf, Abijah Wilder, William Lamson, Eliphilet Briggs.

**Secretaries.**—George A. Wheelock, Leonard Bisco, F. A. Faulkner, Lewis Campbell.

**Chaplains.**—Rev. Z. S. Barstow, Rev. William O. White, Rev. Gilbert Robbins, Rev. Silas Quimby.

**Chief Marshal.**—Levi Chamberlain.

**Aids.**—Selden F. White, Frank S. Fiske.

**Marshals.**—Benjamin F. Adams, Isaac Sturtevant, Virgil M. Kimball, Joshua Wyman, Joseph W. Briggs, Robert Wilson, James B. Elliot, Francis H. Keyes, Samuel A. Gould, Jr., Eben G. Ball, D. W. Buckingham.

The celebration was a success in every particular, and the thousands in attendance highly enjoyed the exercises and listened with pleasure to the stirring music of Gilmore's Brigade band of Boston, and the fine vocal mu-

sic of a large choir of singers under the leadership of W. S. Hutchins. The proceedings closed with a band concert in the town hall, followed by fireworks on the common. It was a glorious day for Keene.

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#### VALEDICTORY

##### On Retiring from Service as Editor of the New Hampshire Sentinel.

With this issue of the *Sentinel* its senior editor retires from the position he has held for more than twenty-eight years, and from active duties in an establishment with which he has been connected for just half a century. The determining cause for this step will be apparent to everyone who stops to consider the ravages which fifty years make upon the health and constitution of even the most superb human structure. A newspaper to be successful must have perpetually at its command the mental and physical abilities of young or middle-aged men endowed with health and talents which enable them to meet the requirements of the newspaper reading public. Realizing this fact, the duty of one who has occupied the position of editor for nearly a generation is so plain that he cannot hesitate a moment beyond a convenient time for relinquishing his charge. Such a time has now come to him, and he retires from duties too burdensome to be longer borne by one who has given his entire life, from early youth to advanced age, to the interests of the one enterprise which has engrossed his attention for a period of fifty years.

And what eventful years were those to which reference is here made! Their history embraces a record not only of the wonderful progress which the world has made in all that tends to the material interests of mankind,

but also a record of the most thrilling events in the life of this great nation.

To dwell upon the transformations which these fifty years have wrought would consume too much time and space; nor, indeed, is there occasion to notice them at length. History has been made with unprecedented rapidity during that period, and the world has progressed at a rate little short of the miraculous. But every stage of that history, every step taken in the world's progress has been recorded in these columns, and to recapitulate here would be to outline the contents of a half century's files of this paper. It has been a glorious thing to live and move and have one's being and to share to some extent as a factor in the world's welfare at such a time, and in that consciousness we rest content without rehearsing the achievements of the past or boasting of anything personal save a record of continuous newspaper work rarely surpassed in activity and length of service.

The prosperity which has ever attended this paper is of itself sufficient evidence that it has been conducted honorably and in the interests of an appreciative community. The political principles which were so ably advocated by its eminent founder, whose memory is still fondly cherished in this community, have been faithfully maintained by each successive incumbent of its editorial chair, and there can be no doubt that those who in turn will control the future policy of the paper will be in a great measure guided thereby. The most valuable assets of any newspaper are popular confidence in its honesty and popular faith in its accuracy. The gauge of that confidence and faith is circulation, and a large circulation, steadily growing, is a first class assurance that

a newspaper is meeting the popular demand for honest editorial advice and a faithful presentation of news. This assertion is especially applicable to the Sentinel, whose circulation is always increasing and whose general prosperity gives assurance that the public appreciates the efforts of its proprietors to make just such a paper as the best interests of this community require. Permanently located in a home of its own, equipped with all the improved machinery and material essential to the filling of unlimited orders for printing, the Sentinel establishment must be ranked among the best of its kind in the State.

It is not without a sigh of regret that our active connection with the Sentinel ceases just as it is entering upon an era of prosperity and usefulness never before experienced in its history. A relief from the burdens and responsibilities inseparably connected with the publication of a daily and weekly newspaper is gladly welcomed; but with this sense of relief comes a natural feeling of regret at the severing of relations, existing in some cases through many years, with patrons, readers and correspondents—relations which, though they have in

a large degree been necessarily somewhat impersonal, have at the same time become intimate and pleasant. Especially to correspondents whose regular contributions have in a large measure aided in increasing the popularity and usefulness of the paper, the retiring editor wishes to make his sincere acknowledgments for their hearty cooperation in efforts to make the Sentinel a welcome visitor in every household in the county, and at the same time he bespeaks for his successors a continuance of the favors which have become a prominent feature of the paper.

With this announcement of a change in the editorial management of the Sentinel we are justified in making the prediction that the paper will be vastly improved in that department. Young, vigorous and well-trained minds will control its immediate future, and its influence and usefulness must increase as the years roll on. We leave it in good hands and with joyful expectation that it is one of the institutions of this community which will be perpetuated to the end of time.

T. C. RAND.

Keene, November 15, 1893.

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